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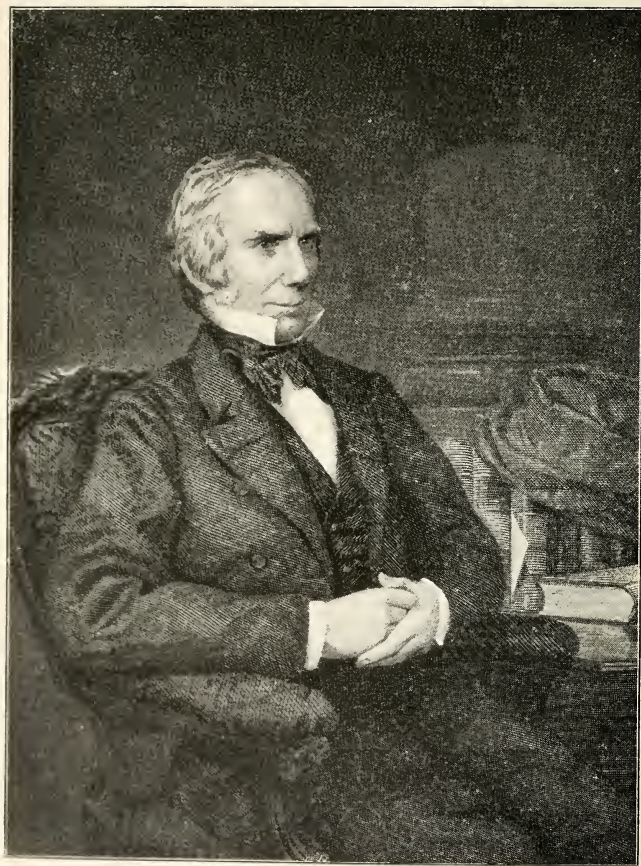
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*H. Clay*

# HENRY CLAY

## THE GREAT COMPROMISER

A BRIEF ESTIMATE OF HIS PLACE IN AMERICAN  
HISTORY

BY

HOWARD W. CALDWELL, A.M., Ph.B.

Author of "Higher Education in Nebraska," "American History, 1815-1861," "Method  
of Teaching History," "American History Studies," etc.

WITH ANECDOTES, CHARACTERISTICS AND  
CHRONOLOGY

CHICAGO

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# Henry Clay

BY H. W. CALDWELL. A.M., Ph.B.

IF we would know a man we must study his hereditary characteristics and his environment. It is of special moment that the latter should be known during the early years when the mind and the disposition as well, are plastic and in a formative condition. Race qualities are more permanent and important than those variations in them which come from the family. To know that a man belongs to the English race, rather than to the Spanish, for example, is vastly more important than to know that he belongs to the Adams family, instead of to the Lee.

This fact aids us in our study of Clay. We know little of his remote, and scarcely more of his immediate ancestry. However, we do know that he belonged to the English race, and that his ancestry were English, even if the attempt to connect them with royal blood has little or no foundation. He and his family belong to the great "common people." He needs, no more than Lincoln does, the adventitious aid of "blood" to give him a great place in American history.

His father was Rev. John Clay, a Baptist clergyman; his mother a Miss Hudson, before marriage. Both were Virginians by birth, and both of English ancestry.

Clay's father died when Henry was only four years old, leaving him the seventh and youngest living child of a family of eight. Tradition rather than history tells us that Rev. John Clay was an earnest, able man with good power as a public speaker. He left a small poor farm to his widow and seven children. With the help of her children Mrs. Clay was able to make a living for herself and them. Yet the fact that we hear of Henry Clay, as a barefoot boy, plowing, and carrying the grain to the grist-mill on horse-back, proves that labor and poverty were both present, and at work fitting "The Mill-boy of the Slashes" for his future career. We know almost nothing of Henry Clay till he was fourteen years of age. But we may presume he spent his time much as other farmer boys did and do, going to school when he could, and aiding in the farm work more and more as the years passed. Perhaps there are a million American boys to-day whose lives are not essentially different from his, except as the inventions of the last century have produced changes.

While, as a boy, and later as a man, he was in the midst of slavery, he never outgrew the fact that to him labor was honorable, for it was an every day fact of his early life. Also, as we shall see, he never forgot his love of rural occupations.

Henry Clay was born April 12, 1777, near Richmond, Virginia. It should be noticed that Independence had been declared only a year before. His earliest impressions, therefore, as a little six year old boy when Peace came, were received in the midst of war. How tenacious



these first impressions are, we all know. Once at least he may have seen the British soldiers, as they, in 1781, made their raid through Virginia. His great rival, Webster, was five years his junior, but even he was born during the contest for Independence. Thus these two great nationalists came into being in a Revolutionary era, and



Birthplace of Henry Clay.

may have imbibed some of their love for the Union from the atmosphere into which they were born.

Clay's formal education was limited to perhaps three years, under Peter Deacon, an Englishman, who was the teacher of the district of the "Slashes" where the Clays lived. The main characteristic of Peter which has come down to us is connected with his excessive drinking. Tradition says he was a good teacher; Clay says however that he learned to read, to write, and to cipher as "far as Practice," in an indifferent manner. Like, perhaps,

most boys who have reached any eminence in later years, Henry was an inveterate reader as far back in his career as we can go. In his mature manhood this does not seem to have been a characteristic; then he gained his knowledge largely from contact with people, and by a sort of intuitive absorption.

Clay left his mother's farm at fourteen to enter a small retail store as clerk. Of his work there we know nothing; but we may presume that the experience gained prepared him to some extent for his next step, by bringing him more into contact with people, and by familiarizing him with the ways of the city. His mother had in 1792 married Captain Henry Watkins. Through his influence Henry obtained a place as a supernumerary assistant in the office of the clerk of the High Court of Chancery of Virginia.

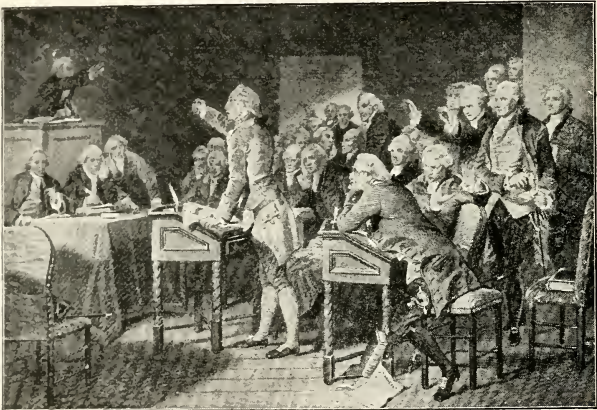
We have now reached the first turning point in the career of Henry Clay. In this office he had to copy legal documents, and to do such general writing as he might be called upon to do. System and order had to be cultivated. A good penmanship had to be formed. But even more important still, he was here brought into contact more or less intimately with many of the best men in the state. He would hear their conversation, and to one, with his eager acquisitive mind, this meant the storing therein of a vast mass of information. When he entered the office he appeared to his fellow clerks, green and awkward. One of them has left us an account of this first impression which will be found in the appendix to this volume. Soon however, the tide turned, and he

became the most popular one of their number.

Only a short time elapsed before he was noticed by Chancellor Wythe, one of the noblest and ablest of Virginia's lawyers, who made Henry his private amanuensis. How much of his time was given to this work, and what proportion of it to his duties, as clerk, we do not know. There is, however, at least one remnant of this work extant. Among the manuscripts in the collections of the Supreme Court at Washington, there is a legal work by Chancellor Wythe, copied by Clay while acting as amanuensis for the great Virginia lawyer. In it are Latin and Greek quotations, and as Clay knew neither language we can understand the pains he took to imitate the forms which he copied. But the mere fact that he became at fifteen or sixteen the trusted friend of Chancellor Wythe was almost an education in itself. Mr. Wythe was able, honest and laborious; he was a friend of all the Virginia statesmen of the time. He was an opponent of slavery and one who like Washington acted in accordance with his profession. Washington freed his slaves by his will; but Wythe did not wait for death, but gave them freedom and aid while yet he could administer it.

Here no doubt young Clay saw, and perhaps met Washington, Jefferson and Marshall as the former was an intimate friend, and the two latter had been law students in Wythe's office. We know from his own recollections that he heard Patrick Henry and went away entranced. These two men had enough in common, in the fact that their feelings and emotions governed them to a

great extent, that it is not strange that the boy was carried away by the impetuous oratory of the man Patrick Henry. Thus, during these years, from the age of fifteen till he reached his twentieth year Clay was in a practical school of the very best kind. Few young men were so favorably situated as he, though it has been the



Patrick Henry Addressing the Virginia Assembly.

fashion of historians to speak as if he had never had any advantages. He lacked only in the systematic training which school and college may give. Here even we are uncertain how great the lack was, for we know that he read widely under the advice of Mr. Wythe, and from the list of books which have come down to us as among those read, we know that much sound literature was covered. That there was a lack in his mental processes in later years we know, for he was always more or less

superficial, ready to jump at conclusions, and moved by momentary impulses. But college men of the highest culture are not free from these faults, hence we cannot be sure that a college training would have cured these defects. He left this work in 1796, going into the law office of Ex-Governor Francis Brooke, who was at this time Attorney-General of the state. For something like a year he devoted his whole time, as far as we know, to the study of law. Again he was favorably situated, for Mr. Brooke was not only an able lawyer, but a helpful adviser. These two men remained life-long friends, and their private correspondence in later years gives us many an insight into the views of Clay to which we should not otherwise have access.

At last Clay was ready to begin his public life, and at twenty he was admitted to the bar. The standard perhaps was not high; yet we need not conceive it too low, for Clay had been in fact studying law, not one year, but five, for much of his work with Chancellor Wythe and in the Clerk's office was fitting him for his legal examinations. Clay had, while in Richmond, been one of the most active young men in founding and in sustaining a debating club. Tradition again says that Clay's speeches, even here, made him a marked man, and secured him friends on all sides.

This then in outline is about all that we know of Clay until we find him in Lexington, Kentucky, in the fall of 1797, ready to begin the practice of law. It is a meagre record, but it may be paralleled in its brevity by that of many of America's foremost men. In this country caste

and class have not been marked enough to hold men down. The nation has in part at least been able to profit by finding and using its talent and genius even when they have sprung, as in the cases of Lincoln, Garrison, Roger Sherman, Franklin, and scores of others, as well as Clay, from the humblest walks of life. We have seen Clay on the farm, barefooted; in the little store; in the clerk's office as a copyist; as the amanuensis of Chancellor Wythe; and finally as a student of law. About all we know in detail, has been given; but the spirit of it all should be noted. All the records and traditions point to the one conclusion, that at this period of his life at least, he was studious, moral and respected by all. Was he as engaging in manners, as captivating in conversation, as loved by his friends as in later years? Was he also as assertive, as fond of command and leadership? We cannot say. Even tradition gives us little to build on. However, in embryo, we can see even from our meagre record something of the Clay of later years.

November, 1797, found Clay settled at Lexington, Kentucky. From this time to his death in 1852, it remained his home, and its people his strongest friends and supporters. Lexington was, perhaps, the center of education and culture in the state. It prided itself on its able men, its schools, its colleges. It was in the midst of the famous "blue grass" region, and was not surpassed by any part of the state in the fertility of its soil. The bar of Lexington included such men as George Nicholas, John Breckinridge, James Brown, and William Murray, men of note and standing in the state, and some

of them in the nation, even. Clay pursued his law studies for a few months after reaching Kentucky; then he was admitted to practice in its courts in competition with such men as those mentioned above. That within two years he could establish himself and gain a paying practice, proves the capacity of the man. In 1799 at the age of twenty-two, he married Lucretia Hart, the daughter of one of the wealthy farmers or planters of that region. His wife was born in Hagerstown, Maryland, and was four years his junior. They had eleven children, five sons and six daughters. Of the latter only two lived to grow to womanhood. One of these, Anna, was his favored child, and was said to be much like her father. When he learned while he was at Washington of her sudden death, it is said that he fainted away, and was much prostrated for many days. It was only by the greatest exertion of will that he shook off the depression and resumed his place in the Senate. This was in 1835, during the time of his great struggle with Jackson, when he is said to have remarked, "My country and my state need my services, so why should I bow down to my private griefs?" Three of his sons were lawyers. One of them was also a graduate of West Point. The latter, Henry, Jr., was killed during the Mexican War. The last son died in Kentucky in 1879.

We need not dwell long on Clay's career as a lawyer. Within a few months after he began his practice it rivaled that of many of the older men at the bar. A very few years found him with a sufficient income to

justify him in purchasing Ashland, an estate of something over five hundred acres, situated just on the outskirts of Lexington. How much, if any part, of the means to make this purchase came from his wife, I have no evidence. There is little recorded in regard to the number of cases that came to him, or of their paying qualities. We find the statement made that in 1806, when he went to Washington, as senator, for the first time, his clients gave him \$3,000 to look after certain cases then pending in the Supreme Court. His first cases were in the criminal court, and it is said that he never had a man convicted whom he defended. In one case only was he prosecutor during his early years, and in this case the man, a negro, was hung.

Clay's sympathetic and emotional nature, not only made him prefer the defence, but also gave him the qualities that fitted him for success on that side. His power over a jury was early manifested; and no doubt he sometimes freed men whose deeds would have justly merited death. One case shows us that the judges of the time were not always "up" on law. The prisoner had already had one trial, and although the evidence seemed overwhelming, yet Clay had so played on the feelings of the jury that it had divided and failed to bring in a verdict.

In the second trial, Clay made no defence, introduced no witnesses; however when he came to make his plea, he insisted that the prisoner could not be tried again, as it would put him twice in jeopardy of life or limb, which was against the constitution. His opponents objected to the argument. The judge at first ruled it out as an im-





Ashland as it Appeared in the Time of Clay.

proper plea. Clay then threw down his brief, gathered up his papers, left the room, remarking that he would not plead at all, if his client was to be deprived of his rights. In a short time as Clay had expected, a messenger came from the judge announcing that he might continue his plea, including this point in his argument. He returned and so worked on the jury that they brought in a verdict of "not guilty." Here we see a trait of Clay that under some form or other manifested itself in his entire career. His aggressive manner, his real or apparent belief in his positions, his rather domineering manner, yet with a rare eloquence, and a masterful personality, so worked on others that they submitted unquestioningly to his leadership, or became his bitter opponents.

Clay's success as a lawyer, however, was not confined entirely to criminal cases. He became noted for his skill in land law, and especially in the somewhat complicated cases that arose in connection with the conflicting titles due to early grants by Virginia. Some of the famous cases with which he was connected had to do with national politics. Twice he was the attorney for Aaron Burr when the latter was accused of treasonable conduct in connection with his western expedition. At the time of his second appearance, December 1806, he had just been chosen United States Senator, and seems to have felt some hesitancy in regard to undertaking the defence. It is also possible that his faith in Burr which at first seemed complete, was at this time a little shaken. At last before appearing in court he asked from Burr a statement of his

plans in writing. Burr gave him a written denial of any wrong intention, claiming, in fact, that the government was fully aware of his intentions, and approved them. At the very moment this was given a messenger was approaching with Jefferson's proclamation for his arrest. Clay never forgave this act, and meeting Burr, a few years later, in New York, he refused to take his hand, or to have any further intimate acquaintance with him. Clay was also a few months later one of Blennerhassetts' attorneys, in his preliminary trial in Kentucky for aiding Burr in his plot.

It is perhaps true that Clay never became one of the great lawyers of his time. This conclusion would almost necessarily follow from his personal qualities, as well as from his career. He studied cases and won each one upon its own merits. His life work was politics rather than law. Statecraft and statesmanship took his time, and strength. Little remained for law proper. Yet he had the ability to win cases, and could no doubt have made a great lawyer. He was quick, versatile, eloquent. Perhaps he was never over logical, and from this lack might have failed in the very highest practice. He was not the rival of Webster, Hopkinson, or many others whose names might be chosen in this field. Yet he succeeded in winning cases and made money when he did give his attention to his law. Once or twice in his career his finances became so involved, that he left politics to recuperate his financial standing, and pay off his debts.

We find Clay's name only rarely associated with the

great law cases in the Supreme Court. Some of his great rivals appear in a large share of the celebrated constitutional cases of the time. Webster's name is constant. Wirt's is common. Clay's appears only occasionally. But does this mean that we should pronounce against him? Certainly not, for his field was no less important. He was a powerful, if not a dominant, force for forty years in determining what laws should be enacted. No talent however great can compass all fields. Clay had his place and his work. How well he filled the one and performed the other we shall try to find out as we progress in our study.

Although it was not until 1803 that Clay was elected to office, he had before that time taken his stand on political questions. As early as 1798 he had urged strongly that in revising the Kentucky constitution provision should be made for gradual emancipation. At that time he was still poor and as yet under the spirit of Chancellor Wythe. In his later years he referred to his course at this time with approval; but it is to be noticed that after he himself became a large slave owner, his service in the anti-slavery cause was in profession rather than in action. Yet it may be admitted that Clay was always ready for emancipation if he could only have seen a way to dispose of the negroes. To free them without colonization ever seemed to him a dangerous undertaking.

His attitude on this question was not liked in Kentucky in 1798; but the radical stand he took the same year against the alien acts, and especially against the sedition act saved his popularity. Thus early we find

Clay joining himself to the Jeffersonian Republicans. He ever insisted that he remained a loyal follower of the Republican school, and claimed in later years that it was the Jackson Democrats who formed the new party, who abandoned their traditions, and not he.

In general in those early days society was rude both in manners and in dress. The hunter stage was only passing away, so it was the bold, fearless, confident man, who impressed himself on the average voter. That Lexington was of a higher social type we may grant; yet that the county of Fayette contained many men of that earlier stamp an anecdote of Clay's first campaign shows. At a large political meeting he was asked if he could shoot. On answering in the affirmative, he was given a gun, a mark was set up and he was requested to try his aim. He did so and by luck hit the very center. The cry was raised, a chance shot! Clay however was equal to the emergency and said he would shoot again when some one beat his first shot. The shot, his readiness and tact turned the tide and he was elected by a good majority.

Amos Kendall who lived in Kentucky some years later, and was for a time tutor of Clay's children, has left on record the following testimony of his impression of Kentucky at this date. "I have I think learned the way to be popular in Kentucky, but do not as yet put it in practice. Drink whiskey, and talk loud with the fullest confidence, and you will hardly fail of being called a clever fellow." Clay was of a higher stamp than this, but still he loved a fine horse and a good race; he learned to love cards and card-playing very greatly at this period

of his life. He was not adverse to a duel. He had the qualities which would make him popular with the Kentucky people of 1800; but he also had those that would make him loved by the men who lived there in 1850 as well.

Clay was re-elected to each succeeding legislature till 1809, when he finally entered the national legislature; in one house or the other of which he was found for the greater part of the rest of his life. In 1806 he served in the state legislature, and from Dec. 29, 1806, till March 4, 1807, in the United States senate. It is interesting to note that he was not yet thirty when his term expired, hence he served the entire time contrary to the terms of the Federal constitution.

There is not a great deal in his Kentucky legislative career that is of sufficient general importance for us to dwell upon. He took an active part in all its proceedings, and early became one of the recognized leaders of the Republican party. The newspapers of the day made such meagre reports of the legislative proceedings that it is difficult to find out what was done.\*

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\*In preparing this article I had access,—due to the kindness of Harvard University—to incomplete files of *The Kentucky Gazette and General Advertiser*, *The Kentucky Gazette*, *The Independent Gazetteer and the Reporter* published at Lexington; and also to the *Paladium*, *The Guardian of Freedom*, *The Western World* and *The Argus of Western America* published at Frankfort. One might transcribe every word that appeared in them all from 1798 to 1811 concerning Henry Clay and yet not have very many pages of print. It is interesting to note that in none of the papers does he advertise as a lawyer. In none as far as I could find was a speech of his given. In only two connections is there an extended notice of any event in which he took part; one has to do with his duel with Humphrey Marshall, and the other with his debate with Felix Grundy concerning the repeal of the charter of the Insurance Company of Lexington.

From the accounts accessible Clay seems to have taken no prominent part in the legislature of 1803; but in 1804 he was pitted against Felix Grundy who was urging the repeal of the charter of the Kentucky Insurance Company. *The Guardian of Freedom* characterizes Grundy as a mere demagogue, without knowledge or learning and unscrupulous, but keen and adroit. The writer speaks of Clay in these words: "The company in the interim received in his legislative capacity, a powerful support from Henry Clay, Esq., a youthful patriot, uniting in his character most accomplished elocution, with an understanding comprehensive and acute; and a heart as mild and honest as ever glowed in the human bosom."

*The Palladium* gives perhaps a fairer version of the debate. It says: "Mr. Grundy led the debate in favor of repeal; and Mr. Clay was at the head of the opposition. We are happy to inform our readers that the speeches of both have been taken down in shorthand and will probably be published as we are convinced that in whatever form they appear they cannot fail to instruct and delight. The house was much crowded during the argument; a number of ladies were present."\* It may be noted that whatever the merits of the case may have been, that Grundy was successful in the legislature, and the law was repealed by a large vote, but as the Governor in-

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\*In a letter from Mrs. Susan M. Clay of Lexington, Kentucky, dated Sept. 27, 1898, I quote these words: "I have the Clay letters and papers, but I am quite sure that I have none of the speeches made in this debate, and doubt if any of them exist unless they have been preserved in the family of Mr. Grundy." I have been unable to get any trace of either speech, and presume that the editor never carried his plan into execution."

terposed his veto, victory practically rested with Clay.

Clay was active in 1805 in legislative measures as may be seen from the fact that *The Palladium* notes on Nov. 21 and again on the 22, the 23, and the 27, that Clay has been placed on committees to prepare and bring in bills.

The introduction of the following resolution, Nov. 5, 1805 would seem to indicate that Clay was aiming at securing more system in the management of the finances of the state: "Resolved, that a committee of finance be appointed to consist of seven members, to whom shall be referred all matters in relation to the revenue, and who may from time to time suggest any new subjects of taxation, or defects in the revenue laws for the consideration of the house, and that the said committee shall possess the power necessary to accomplish the foregoing objects." Clay was appointed chairman of the committee, but we have no record in regard to what was accomplished.

We have now reached the moment when Clay first enters national politics. We wish we had other records than this meagre one taken from *The Palladium* of Dec. 11, 1806, giving the proceedings of the legislature of Nov. 19. "The resignation" of General Adair as a senator in the Congress of the United States "was received; when Mr. Henry Clay was elected in his room, to serve till the 4th of March next." Was there a contest? Was no thought given to the fact that he was not yet thirty? Why was he chosen? Such questions as these come to us, but the answer can only be a speculative one. "The dead past has buried its dead."

At the same session a charge was made that Clay had



been bribed, but a committee appointed to investigate completely exonerated him. Clay's political courage was proved in more than one way in the Kentucky legislature. At one time a motion was made to prohibit the reading of any elementary law book of England, or the citation of any English precedent in any court in the state. One can hardly believe that prejudice could carry a legislature to such an extreme as this. It would have cut Kentucky off from its past, and deprived it of the use of the great principles of the common law. Yet it was found that about four fifths of the members were for it, and Clay had to use to the utmost his reason and eloquence to defeat the measure. For fear that even he could not prevent its passage he moved to amend it so as to make the prohibition extend only to decisions which had been made since 1776.

In the last legislature in which he sat a contested election case was referred to his committee. The report which he then prepared became a precedent and has been followed in similar cases in Kentucky ever since. There were three candidates for the legislature from a certain district. The one who had the greatest number of votes proved to be disqualified as he at that time held another office. It was claimed that the candidate having the next highest number of votes was then entitled to a seat. Clay denied this asserting that there was no election. His logic was so irresistible that his report was adopted and has never been contravened.

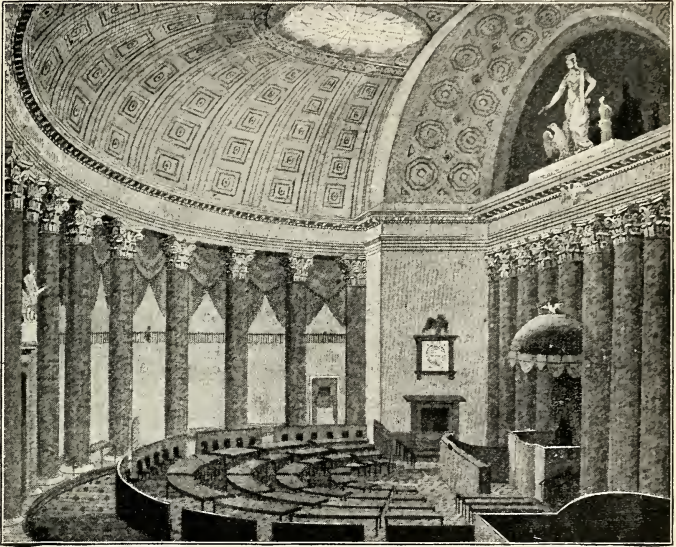
The last point in his career in the state legislature which we need mention is in connection with his duel

with Humphrey Marshall. It arose in a debate over a resolution which Clay had introduced that all members should clothe themselves in homespun garments. It was just after the attack on the *Chesapeake* when the patriotic spirit was high. Clay was moved by his desire to free America from all dependence on England and Europe, and in a small degree, perhaps, by his later protective ideas. Marshall as a Federalist taunted him. The debate ran high, and led to a challenge from Clay. Three rounds were fought, and both were slightly wounded. The correspondence and terms are peculiarly expressive of the age.

Before the close of this period of Clay's life, he had taken strong grounds in favor of internal improvements, and had begun in a tentative way to outline his so-called "American System." However it was not until after the experience of the War of 1812 that he became entirely clear and certain in regard to his own beliefs, and of the policy that ought to be pursued by the nation. The War of 1812 was vastly important in giving to the people of the United States a true view of themselves, as well as a place in the world's estimation. Clay was a leader among the men in favor of the war; yet it may be said that it caused him, also, to develop with great rapidity, and left him perhaps the truly national statesman that he remained to the day of his death.

Before entering the House in November, 1811, Clay had served two short terms to fill vacancies in the Senate. About four months in 1807, when he had proved his energy and fearlessness by making a motion the fourth

day after taking his seat, and by two or three short speeches in advocacy of the policy of internal improvements at a later date. At that time he desired to have certain lands set apart to pay for the construction of a



The Old House of Representatives in the time of Henry Clay.  
Now Statuary Hall.

canal on the Kentucky side, around the Falls of the Ohio, near Louisville.

From 1809 to 1811 he took a prominent part in Senatorial life, and made himself a national reputation as an orator and an energetic party leader. In the first of his Congressional speeches, which have been preserved for us, he argued in favor of giving encouragement to domes-

tic manufactures, not to the extent of making us a nation manufacturing for exportation, but to such an extent as to supply our own needs. "The nation," he says, "which imports its clothing from abroad is but little less dependent than if it imported its bread."

Clay's next speech was in advocacy of the claim that West Florida had been a part of the Louisiana purchase. He argued well in support of this position, and showed care in investigation and keen ability in stating his points. This speech proved his intense Americanism and his willingness to defy Spain and England too, if necessary. He was for taking immediate possession of that which he believed to be our own.

But his first really great speech was made in opposition to the recharter of the National Bank. Clay's later years are so closely interwoven with the Bank, as its greatest champion, that it is seldom noticed that he began his national career as its opponent, on grounds of both unconstitutionality and in expediency. He found no clause in the constitution from which there might be implied the right to charter such a bank. In many ways he was already breaking from the strict-construction views of the early Republicans, but in this case we find him arguing along the line of the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions of 1798. Mr. Richie of the *Virginia Examiner* claims that Clay never satisfactorily answered his own arguments as set forth at this time.

In 1816, Clay admitted that his views had undergone a change, but it is interesting to note that he rather shifted his grounds than attempted to answer his ar-

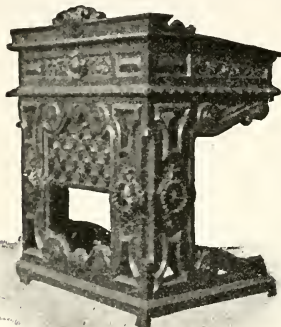
guments of 1811. He frankly confessed that he had modified his views, yet he attempted to make the change seem as little as possible. In 1816 he emphasized the fact that the Kentucky legislature in 1811 had instructed him to oppose the recharter, and stated that that was one of the principal reasons for his action. However it will be noticed that in his speech of 1811 he put very little stress on this factor. He also claimed the old bank had not been strictly true to its obligations, which was a cause for his opposition; again he had made little of this in earlier years. His biographers have, in general, asserted that this is the only change on any great measure that he made during his long political career. He himself asserts this on more than one occasion. It may be true that in belief he made no other such marked change; but in actions he was not always consistent as we shall see in our later discussions.

We are now ready to turn to Clay's career in the House of Representatives. He was a member continually from 1811 to 1825 with two short exceptions; one during the time he was in Europe as Peace Commissioner, 1814-1815; and the other 1821-22 when he resigned that he might recuperate his private finances which were in a deplorable condition.

Clay took his seat in the House Nov. 3, and was elected speaker the same day by the following vote; Clay 75, Bibb 38, and six scattering. He is the only man in American History who began his career in the House as its speaker. The choice proved to be an exceedingly wise one, as he was quick, alert, ready and firm, as well as in

general, just and fair. On his election he addressed the House in these words:—

“In coming to the station which you have done me the honor to assign me—an honor for which you will be pleased to accept my thanks—I obey rather your commands than my own inclinations. I am sensible of the



Desk used in the House of Representatives when Clay was Speaker.

imperfections which I bring along with me, and a consciousness of these would deter me from attempting a discharge of the duties of the chair, did I not rely confidently upon your support. Should the rare and delicate occasion present itself when your speaker should be called upon to check or control the wanderings

or intemperances in debate, your justice will, I hope, ascribe to his interposition the motives only of public good and a regard to the dignity of the house. And in all instances be assured, gentlemen, that I shall with infinite pleasure, afford every facility in my power to the despatch of public business, in the most agreeable manner.”

Clay was speaker during practically all the time he was a member of the House. Usually he was chosen with little or no opposition. Yet it cannot be said it was because he was colorless. On the contrary he spoke

often, and on nearly all important questions that came before Congress. His speeches are also marked by incisive vigor and frequently with a cutting sarcasm that could not have been without its sting. Neither was he always by any means on the winning side. In his attacks upon Jackson's course in the Seminole War, as well as in his measures concerning the South American Republics he was in a minority. However when the time came for the election to the speakership, if Clay wished the place, there was no chance for any one against him. Certainly the half dozen times he was chosen speaker must lead us to believe there was honesty of purpose, and ability in action, or such a career could not have been possible. It is impossible in a brief account like this, to follow Clay into the details of his life during these years—in many respects his most interesting years. It may be said that the course of American History was changed to some degree by him. Perhaps, indeed, no other man unless it were Jackson had so much influence on its destiny as he. Clay was not as solid as Webster, as devoted to a cause as Calhoun, as determined as Jackson, yet he surpassed either of them in political leadership. He was never greatly out of sympathy with his times. He absorbed public feeling, and led rather than created it; but his influence itself was a factor in making it. In these earlier years of our history leadership meant more than it does to-day. But even then, it must ever be kept in mind, the history of the time cannot be told in the life of any one great man, nor even in the lives of all the noted states-

men; even then the people through public opinion were the ruling power in the long run.

As the great leader in the west, in 1812, Clay, joined by Calhoun, Lowndes, Porter and others decided that the time for war had come. England must cease to impress American seamen, to blockade American ports, and to intercept and practically destroy American commerce. France must learn to respect our rights. It mattered little with which one the war should take place. Circumstances, rather than choice, decided that England should be the enemy. Clay remarked once that it was only our inability which deterred us from declaring war against them both.

But Clay himself can best tell us his view at this time. His speeches made in connection with the war of 1812 are among the most eloquent he ever made. In urging an increase of the navy he said:

"The groundless imputation, that those who are friendly to a navy, were espousing a principal inimical to freedom, should not terrify him." "The principle of a navy. . . . was no longer open to controversy. It was decided when Mr. Jefferson came into power. . . ." "It is the appropriate, the natural (if the term may be applied) connection of foreign commerce. The shepherd and his faithful dog, are not more necessary to guard the flocks, that browse and gambol on the neighboring mountains. . . We have only to make the proper use of the bounties spread before us, to render us prosperous and powerful. Such a navy as he had contended for, will form a new bond of connection between the states,



concentrating their hopes, their interests, their affections.”

As the war progressed, the fact that the Federalists were antagonists became more apparent. New England especially was opposed to the war, and to Madison's administration. Clay, as the foremost orator of the war party, in a great speech Jan. 8, 1813, exposed completely the course of the opposition. A few passages will give us an insight into his oratory, and also show us how sarcastic he could be on occasion:

“Perhaps, in the course of the remarks, which I may feel called upon to make, gentlemen may apprehend, that they assume too harsh an aspect; but I have only now to say that I shall speak of parties, measures, and things, as they strike against my moral sense, protesting against the imputation of any intention, on my part, to wound the feelings of any *gentlemen*.”

“The course of that opposition (the Federalists) . . . was singular and I believe, unexampled in the history of any country. The arrangement with Mr. Erskine is concluded. It is first applauded and then censured by the opposition. . . . Restriction after restriction has been tried; negotiation has been resorted to until further negotiation would have been disgraceful. Whilst these peaceful experiments are undergoing a trial, what is the conduct of the opposition? They are the champions of war—the proud—the spirited—the sole repository of the nation's honor—the men of exclusive vigor and energy. . . . Is the administration for negotiation? The opposition is tired, sick, disgusted with negotiation. . . . When, however, foreign nations, perhaps emboldened by

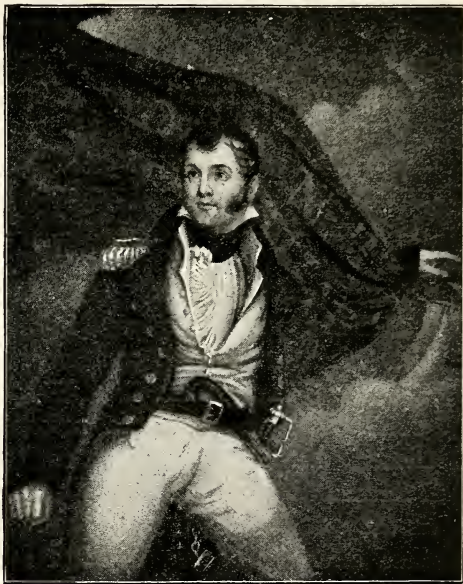
the very opposition here made refused to listen to the amicable appeals, . . . when, in fact, war with one of them has become identified with our independence and our sovereignty, . . . behold the opposition veering round and becoming the friends of peace and commerce. They tell you of the calamities of war, its tragical events. . . . They tell you that honor is an illusion! Now, we see them exhibiting the terrific forms of the roaring king of the forests. Now, the meekness and humility of the lamb. They are for war and no restrictions, when the administration is for peace. They are for peace and restrictions, when the administration is for war. You find them, sir, tacking with every gale, displaying the colors of every party, and of all nations, steady only in one unalterable purpose—to steer, if possible, into the haven of power.”

“The gentleman from Massachusetts, in imitation of some of his predecessors of 1799, has entertained us with a picture of cabinet plots, presidential plots, and all sorts of plots, which have been engendered by the diseased state of the gentleman’s imagination. I wish, Sir, another plot, of a much more serious and alarming character—a plot that aims at the dismemberment of our union—had only the same imaginary existence.” It was in this same speech that Clay made the plea for the American sailor that has been quoted so many times; yet, as it is not accessible to many an American youth, let it be repeated once more:

“If Great Britain desires a mark, by which she can know her own subjects, let her give them an ear mark.

The colors that float from the masthead should be the credentials of our seamen. There is no safety to us, and the gentlemen have shown it, but in the rule, that all who sail under the flag (not being enemies) are protected

by the flag. It is impossible that this country should ever abandon the gallant tars, who have won for us such gallant trophies. Let me suppose that the genius of Columbus should visit one of them in the oppressor's prison, and attempt to reconcile him to his forlorn and wretched condition. She would say to him in



Oliver H. Perry, the Naval Hero of the  
War of 1812.

the language of the gentlemen on the other side, 'Great Britain intends you no harm; she did not mean to impress you, but one of her own subjects; having taken you by mistake, I will remonstrate, and try to prevail upon her, by peaceable means, to release you; but I cannot, my son,

fight for you.' If he did not consider this mere mockery, the poor tar would address her judgment, and say, 'you owe me, my country protection; I owe you, in return, obedience. I am no British subject, I am a native of old Massachusetts, where lived my aged father, my wife, my children. I have faithfully discharged my duty. Will you refuse to do yours?' Appealing to her passions, he would continue: 'I lost this eye in fighting under Truxton, with the Insurgente; I got this scar before Tripoli; I broke this leg on board the *Constitution*, when the *Guerriere* struck.' If she remained still unmoved, he would break out, in the accents of mingled distress and despair,

“ ‘Hard, hard is my fate! Once I freedom enjoyed,  
Was as happy as happy could be!

Oh! How hard is my fate, how galling these chains!’

“I will not imagine the dreadful catastrophe to which he would be driven, by the abandonment of him to his oppressor. It will not be, it cannot be that this country will refuse him protection.”

As Clay was one of the most earnest, if not the most earnest, advocate of war in 1812, so during its entire course he remained its most zealous and aggressive supporter. He was for vigorous measures. He wished to press the attack on land and sea, and could he have had a united and enthusiastic people behind him, ready to act in accordance with his plans, the result might have been more glorious than it was.

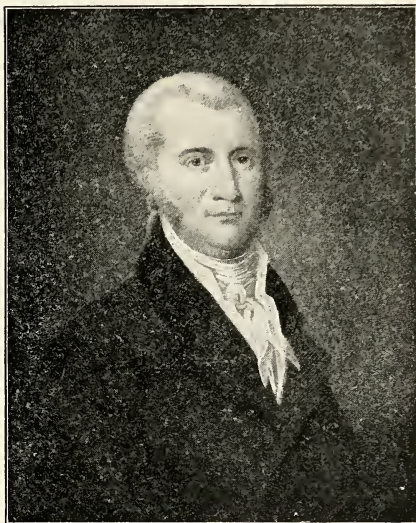
Yet while he was anxious for war, and persisted in its prosecution, he was ready for peace at the first moment

he believed that it could be obtained on honorable terms. Clay was, through his whole life, an opponent of war for its own sake. He was fearful of standing armies.

The military hero was dreaded by Clay, if he entered civil life merely on his military record.

Thus in 1814, when it was thought that honorable peace might be obtained, Clay was ready to go to Europe as an envoy. He was joined by J. Q. Adams, Gallatin, Russell and Bayard. He and Adams were the irascible, radical members, ready to strike fire, like flints at every moment.

Adams seems to have felt that the navigation of the Mississippi river might be yielded to England, if only provision could be made to secure the New Foundland fisheries to the people of New England. Clay reversed the picture. Thus they quarreled, and within the commission the discord was scarcely less than between them and the English negotiators. However



James A. Bayard.  
Born July 28, 1767. Died Aug. 6, 1815.

they had one supreme good quality—they were outwardly united toward Great Britain. Gallatin was the peace-maker. Without him it is probable that no result could have been reached. Clay was daring in his demands, and showed little of the diplomatic spirit that had characterized diplomacy in the past. His western energy, straight-forwardness, and aggressiveness came into good play. His admirers claim that he alone of the commissioners fully realized how thoroughly ready England was for peace, and hence he alone understood how great the demands were which might be made without endangering peace. Of course his detractors hold that it was mere good luck that prevented his course from ruining the whole negotiations.

The English commissioners yielded point by point of their first demands. Gallatin's middle policy won with the Americans. Finally the men set their names to a treaty which contained no word, in regard to a single question, for which the war was begun. Yet it may be said the American commissioners made a good treaty of peace; one honorable to them and to their country.

Clay remained in Europe for a few months more, and helped to form a commercial treaty with England. He then returned to America, only to be sent as before by his people to Congress; and again immediately to be chosen speaker of the House.

Clay saw at that time what it took some Americans many years to appreciate; viz: that we had as the result of the war gained respect abroad, and at home a self-consciousness that meant much for the future. The

national feeling had developed with marvelous rapidity under the stress of war, the naval victories, and the wonderful achievement by Jackson, on January 8th, at New Orleans. Clay held that the war had in national development alone been worth far more than it cost. The effect in uniting the country, and in developing the national idea was similar to what we see going on around us now, as the result of the recent war for the liberation of Cuba.

Clay had been imbued with national tendencies before the war. After it these tendencies became the basis for rules of action under all circumstances. All legislation should have as its goal the realization of national life.

Under this incentive he became the champion of the National bank. As we have seen, in 1811, he was its deadly enemy—now he becomes its firm friend.

As early as 1807 he urged that the United States government should aid in internal improvements. In the years following 1815, he is a constant and zealous advocate of the most wide-reaching system of improvements under national auspices.

He had in his earlier years joined with Washington, Jefferson, and Madison in favoring the use of home made articles; in the years from 1815 till 1844 he is a firm believer in the efficacy of his so-called "American system" as the panacea for all the ills to which the national life was heir, even if it be true that in 1833 he was the author, and the leading advocate of the famous compromise tariff. Clay yielded then to save the Union.

These financial measures are the best known, and are perhaps the ones on which his fame and name rest. But to my mind he rose to his greatest height in oratory and in unselfish devotion to the cause of liberty, in his advocacy of the cause of the South American people in their struggle for freedom from Spanish oppression. To be sure there was much in his argument that was not wholly logical. He was led to say, in the moment of highest exaltation, when carried away by the fervor of his oratory, that ignorance on the part of the people was no bar to self-government. But in this earnest advocacy of the rights of a people, in his intense devotion to the cause of democracy, he earned the praise of all who long to see the time come when the brotherhood of man will be recognized as a fact as well as a theory.

He may not fully have recognized the truth that democracy as a fact is only practicable when there is a relatively high state of development. But he was standing for the right of a people to a democratic form of government and of society, at the very earliest practicable moment. He said with much truth that "it is the doctrine of thrones, that man is too ignorant to govern himself." He might well have added that aristocrats and plutocrats hold to the same doctrine. The time is not even yet passed when we have ceased to need the entrancing voice of a Clay, leading us to recognize our duty towards man as he struggles upward toward the goal of self-government.

In these same years we hear his glowing words as in

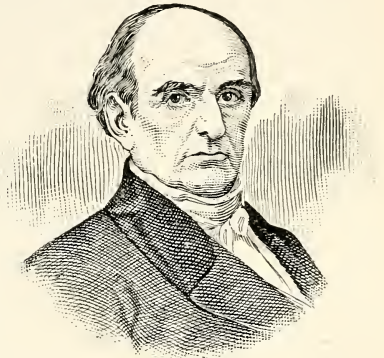


1824 he speaks on this resolution introduced by Webster: "Resolved, that provision ought to be made by laws, for defraying the expenses incident to the appointment of an agent or commissioner to Greece, whenever the president shall deem it expedient to make such appointment." On this resolution he said: "Go home, if

you can; go home if you dare to your constituents, and tell them you voted it down; meet, if you can, the appealing countenances of those who sent you here, and tell them that you shrank from the declaration of your own sentiments; that you cannot tell how, but that some unknown

dread, some indescribable apprehension, some indefinable danger, drove you from your purpose; that the spectre of scimiters, and crowns, and crescents gleamed before you and alarmed you; and that you suppressed all the noble feelings prompted by religion, by liberty, by national independence, and by humanity: I cannot bring myself to believe that such will be the feeling of a majority of the committee."

Clay began as early as 1817 to advocate the cause of the South American revolutionists. By 1818 he believed they were entitled to recognition as independent repub-



Daniel Webster.

lics. He persisted in his efforts, and in the course of a few years, he found that Congress had veered round and was as enthusiastically with him, as it had been antagonistic to his ideas a few years earlier. His speeches of these years contain many brilliant passages. The following will illustrate their general tenor:

“But, sir, it seems that a division of the Republican party is about to be made by the proposition. . . . . What has been the great principle of the party to which the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. Wilson] refers, from the first existence of the government to the present day? An attachment to liberty, a devotion to the great cause of humanity, of freedom, of self-government, and of equal rights. . . . . What is the great principle that has distinguished parties in all ages, and under all governments—democrats and federalists, whig and tories, plebeians and patricians? The one distrustful of human nature, appreciates less the influence of reason and of good dispositions and appeals more to physical force; the other party, confiding in human nature, relies much on moral power, and applies to force as an auxiliary only to the operations of reason.”

“Nay, I have seen a project in the newspapers, and I should not be surprised, after what we have already seen, at its being carried into effect, for sending a minister to the Porte. Yes, sir, from Constantinople, or from the Brazils; from Turk or Christian; from black or white; from the Bey of Algiers or the Bey of Tunis; from the devil himself, if he wore a crown we should receive an ambassador. . . . . But, let the minister come from a

poor republic, like that of La Plata, and we turn our back on him." . . . . .

"An honorable gentleman from Virginia [Mr. Sheffey] had said the people of South America were incapable from the ignorance and superstition which prevail among them, of achieving independence or enjoying liberty. And to what cause is that ignorance and superstition owing? Was it not to the vices of their government? to the tyranny and oppression, hierarchical and political, under which they groaned? If Spain succeeded in riveting their chains upon them would not that ignorance and superstition be perpetuated? . . . . . For his part he wished their independence. It was the final step toward improving their condition." . . . . .

"Wherever in America her [Spain's] sway extends, everything seems to pine and wither beneath its baneful influence. . . . . Our revolution was mainly directed against the mere theory of tyranny. We had suffered comparatively but little; we had, in some respects, been kindly treated; but our intrepid and intelligent fathers saw, in the usurpation of the power to levy an inconsiderable tax, the long train of oppressive acts that were to follow. They rose; they breasted the storm; they achieved our freedom. Spanish America for centuries has been doomed to the practical effects of an odious tyranny. If we were justified, they were more than justified."

In all these speeches we get only illustrations of the one sentiment which he vividly expressed in a speech of 1810: "I have no commiseration for princes. My

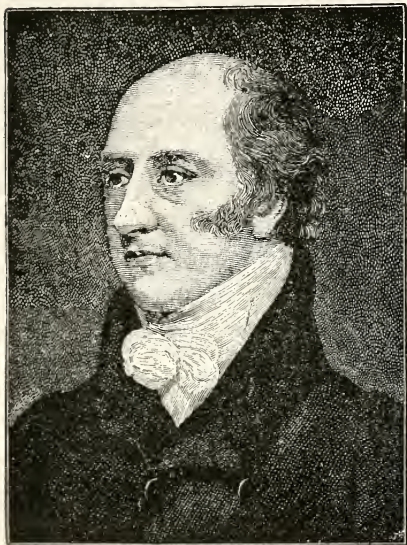
sympathies are reserved for the great mass of mankind."

Richard Rush in a letter to Clay of June 23, 1827, states very clearly that he believes Clay deserved the

credit for the existence of the South American Republics.

He says:

"I have just read Lord Grey's speech, and cannot resist the desire I feel to send it to you. You will recognize in it sentiments I have expressed as regards Mr. Canning and the new South American States. If Earl Grey had been better informed, he would have said that it was *you* who did most to call them into being.



George Canning.  
Born 1770. Died 1827.

I say this in no idle spirit of praise, having always, abroad and at home, expressed the opinion, that, next to their own exertions, the South-Americans owe to you more than to any other man in either hemisphere, their independence, you having led the way to our acknowledgment of it. Without our acknowledgment, England would not have taken the step to this day. This is my belief. I give

Mr. Canning no credit for the part he acted. It was forced upon him by our lead, which he never had the magnanimity to avow, but strove to claim all the merit for England, or rather for himself."

Monroe offered Clay a position in his cabinet; he refused to accept partly perhaps because he was piqued that Adams, not he, had been made Secretary of State; and partly because he felt that his place was in the legislature rather than in the cabinet. Whatever the reason Clay was exceedingly critical during the eight years of Monroe's administration. Scarcely had Monroe's second term begun when the intrigues for the succession in 1825 invaded both Congress and the cabinet.

Adams, Calhoun and Crawford in the cabinet were jealous of each other, and were looking with longing eyes to the election of 1824. Clay in Congress, could not entirely free himself from a desire so to guide its action as to make him strong at the expense of those more closely associated with the administration. Of course by 1822 Jackson had begun to rise up to threaten each and all of the men who had a civil life only to pit against him as a military hero.

Clay's attitude toward Jackson cannot be said to have been wholly determined by his fear of him as a rival for the presidency. In the matter of the Seminole War, and the invasion of Florida by Jackson, at that time, Clay had been very radical in his utterances. Unless we decide that Clay was carried away by his oratory, we must conclude that he greatly feared that the country was in danger sooner or later of being destroyed by some

military chieftain. Clay had expressed himself in two great speeches on the subject of Jackson's course in connection with the Seminole War. After one has read the following extracts, it would seem that it ought to be clear why in the election of 1825, it was almost impossible for Clay and Jackson to work in harmony.

"General Jackson says that when he received that letter he no longer hesitated. No, sir, he did no longer hesitate. He received it on the 23rd, he was in Pensacola on the 24th, and immediately after set himself before the fortress of San Carlos . . . which he shortly reduced. . . . Wonderful energy! Ample promptitude! alas, that it had not been an energy and a promptitude within the pale of the constitution, and according to the orders of the chief magistrate." . . . . .

"I will not trespass much longer upon the time of the committee: but I trust I shall be indulged with some few reflections upon the danger of permitting the conduct on which it has been my painful duty to animadvert, to pass without a solemn expression of the disapprobation of this house. Recall to your recollection the free nations which have gone before us. Where are they now?

'Gone glimmering through the dream of things that were,  
A school boy's tale, the wonder of the hour.'

"And how have they lost their liberties? If we could . . . . ask a Grecian, if he did not fear some daring military chieftain, covered with glory, some Philip or Alexander, would one day overthrow the liberties of his country, the confident and indignant Grecian would exclaim,

No! no! we have nothing to fear from our heroes; our liberties are eternal." . . . .

"I hope not to be misunderstood. I am far from intimating that Gen. Jackson cherishes any designs inimical to the liberties of his country. I believe his intentions to be pure and patriotic. . . . But precedents if bad are fraught with the most dangerous consequences. . . . Against the alarming doctrine of unlimited discretion in our military chieftains when applied even to prisoners of war, I must enter my protest. . . . . We are fighting a great moral battle, for the benefit, not only of our own country, but of all mankind." . . . . "To you, Mr. Chairman, belongs the high privilege of transmitting unimpaired, to posterity, the fair character and liberty of our country." . . . . "Beware how you give a fatal sanction, in this infant period of our republic, scarcely yet two score years old to military insubordination. Remember that Greece had her Alexander, Rome her Cæsar, England her Cromwell, France her Bonaparte, and that if we escape the rock on which they split, we must avoid their errors." . . . . .

"I hope gentlemen will deliberately survey the awful isthmus on which we stand. They may bear down all opposition; they may even vote the General the public thanks; they may carry him triumphantly through this house. But, if they do, in my humble judgment, it will be a triumph of the principle of insubordination, a triumph of the military over the civil power, a triumph over the powers of this house, a triumph over the constitution of the land. And I pray most devoutly to

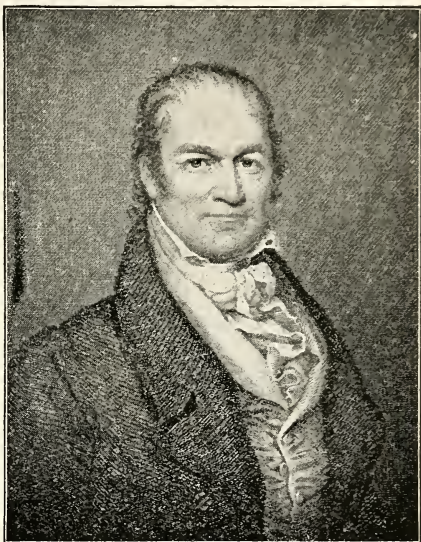
Heaven, that it may not prove, in its ultimate effects and consequences, a triumph over the liberties of the people."

The campaign of 1824 had begun as early as 1822. The Federalists had by this time disappeared as a national party, and did not offer to put forward a presidential candidate. The struggle was entirely within the Republican party, and was in the main, a personal contest. In 1822 Clay's correspondence shows that he was planning to have the legislature of Ohio nominate him for the presidency. He preferred to come before the people in this manner rather than to be presented by his own state. For some time he seemed to fear Crawford most, but after the latter was stricken with apoplexy, he felt that his real and dangerous rival was Adams. It was not till late in the campaign that he came to realize that the man whom he had attempted to have censured a few years earlier in Congress, for his course in the Seminole War, had been taken up by the people, and was being pressed in earnest for the presidency. In one of Clay's letters to a friend in Ohio he stated that the nomination of Jackson by the legislature of Tennessee was only to satisfy local pride, and that Jackson could find no support outside of his own state. But by the beginning of 1824 he had to admit that Pennsylvania was entirely "mad" with Jacksonism. However even to the last moment almost he refused to believe that the American people would choose for the highest civil office in their gift, the man who was only a successful general; for Clay claimed that Jackson had done practically nothing in



political life, was not a student of public affairs; and also that he was hot-headed, and as Clay believed despotic and entirely unsafe.

However successful Clay may have been in judging public opinion, in general, he certainly was utterly mistaken in regard to its attitude toward Jackson. Clay was never quite so optimistic after his contact with Jackson in the years 1825 to 1833, as he had been before. In his private letters he said he would not wholly despair of the future of the Republic. He could not but feel that



William H. Crawford.

Born Feb. 24, 1772. Died Sept. 15, 1834.

there was sufficient honesty and public worth in the American people to lead them to turn from the path upon which they had entered. Yet he never either in public or in private was able to understand Jackson nor to gauge correctly the motives that were prompting the people to support him. That Clay was honest is doubtless true. That Jackson was equally so

would now be denied by few. Yet these men went to their graves each believing that the other was dishonest, and that his triumph endangered the perpetuity of the Republic for which either would have willingly laid down his life had he felt it necessary for its preservation. In general Clay was not a man with fierce hatreds as was Jackson; yet, in this particular case, it seems that the intensity of his mistrust and dislike was not exceeded by Jackson himself.

When the campaign ended it was found that the electors had made no one president. Jackson led with 99 votes, while Adams came next with 84. Crawford had 41 to Clay's 37, so Clay was not one of the three highest, hence could not be voted for by the House. When it became its duty to choose a president, Clay as speaker of the House, as the most influential and powerful man in it, had it in his power to determine which one of these three men should be made president. During the campaign it was clear that his friends at least, if not he himself, leaned toward Crawford. At the last moment almost, in the campaign, Gallatin had withdrawn as the candidate for vice-president on the Crawford ticket. His friends were in general for Clay for the place. There are indications in Clay's letters, that had this plan been broached soon enough, it might have been considered. At least Clay was very careful in his replies not to antagonize the friends of Crawford who were fashioning this plan.

When the election was over, however, and the vote of Clay had to be cast for some one, his choice was soon

made. He felt, at least as soon as he had seen Crawford, that his sickness had disqualified him for the place. In his letters he frequently makes the statement that Adams would not be his choice at all were he free to choose from whom he would; yet since it was either Jackson or Adams he preferred the latter. Perhaps as a courageous statesman he had to take a side, and to use his influence and his friends to win. However as it proved, it cost him dear. Before this time Clay's reputation had been as spotless as his public character. From this time on he had to face the cry of "bargain and corruption." Jackson and thousands of the American people believed that Clay had voted for Adams, in return for the promise that Adams would make Clay Secretary of State. The proof is overwhelming that no such agreement was entered into, but the charge was made; some attempted proofs were set forth; and he could not put it down. He accepted the office, and people would believe that it had been bought. The charge has been made by Mr. Colton, Clay's biographer, that the corruption was on the other side, and that there was a conspiracy to force Clay to vote for Jackson, or to ruin Clay.

But the truth is Colton succeeded no better in his charge, than did the friends of Jackson in theirs, and to my mind a careful, if not an exhaustive, study of all that has been said on both sides, leaves the impression that the times and the character of the men concerned offer the true explanation. As a matter of fact both were high-minded, patriotic statesmen. Both were intense. Both were ambitious. The thought of wrong

got a lodgement in two such minds. It was ineradicable. The people were not yet self-centered. They believed, as we do yet too often, that improper motives always guided men in official positions. In a word it was a vast mistake and misconception. Neither was capable of understanding the other. Each was strong on one side of his character and weak on another. But both were above selling themselves, or their country, or its interests, to gratify personal ambition. Yet it must be said that Clay erred. He saw it when too late, and in 1842, in a speech to his neighbors he admitted it. His true place was in Congress. He had no right to lay himself open to the suspicion that his vote had been used to further his own longings. He might have been president had he not become Adams's Secretary of State. For this latter place Clay was well fitted, but he lost a greater stake, and brought much sorrow on himself by not having avoided even the appearance of evil, as well as the evil itself.

The four years that Clay was Secretary of State were on the whole years of disappointment to him. To be sure he could point to the fact that he had concluded more treaties with foreign nations than all his predecessors together, yet this fact satisfied him little when he failed in his greatest plans, and had also to fight the cry of "corruption" during the entire time.

Immediately upon the inauguration of Adams, new party ties began to be formed, and it was soon seen that the "Era of Good Feeling" was at an end. Adams and Clay were able to carry most of their respective friends

into the support of the new administration; thus the "ins" were content. However the "outs" also tended to join in criticism of the measures of the new government. Gradually as the measures of Adams and Clay unfolded themselves, those who had supported Jackson and Crawford as well as most of Calhoun's friends began to fuse into one party. Their battle-cry was "avenge the people," who had been cheated out of their will by the corrupt union of Adams and Clay. Nearly or quite one-third of Clay's private letters during these years contain some reference to this charge. He made one or two masterly speeches on the question. He wrote some of his strongest papers for the press on the subject. Seemingly he had completely refuted the charge. His friends like Webster and Lafayette, congratulated him on the overwhelming success of his defence. Yet it all seemed to be of no avail. Jackson finally lent his name formally to the charge, and cited Buchanan as his witness. The latter did not sustain the charge. Again it would seem that the victory was won. But no! Clay never escaped the effect of his indiscretion, or his mistake whichever we may call it. The lesson is evident, a man must not only be pure in fact, but he must also avoid the very appearance of corruption.

For years as we have seen Clay had been the friend of the South American Republics. Now as Secretary of State seemingly the time had come when he could aid them as he had wished to do in the past. Yet fate stood in his way. In the senate, if the majority were not actively hostile, they were ready at least to thwart his

plans by indirection. This was soon made manifest in connection with the proposed Panama Congress. A meeting of delegates from the various American states was to be held on the isthmus to take into consideration the interests of this continent. Here was the chance to form the "Human Freedom League" that Clay had desired in order that it might be ready to thwart the plans of the "Holy Alliance" of the European nations. Clay found however that even Adams was cooler blooded than he, and felt the necessity of caution. In two elaborate messages Adams made it clear to Congress that he did not intend to send commissioners to the Panama Congress unless the money was first appropriated. Yet even then the Senate delayed confirmation. Adams also stated in his messages that the delegates would only have power to consult. They would have the right to conclude nothing.

However Congress quibbled lest we should in some way become involved in foreign complications. Again Adams narrowed the Monroe doctrine so that it meant only that each American State should resist the attempt to plant colonies within its borders by its own means and strength. In every way it would seem that he had guarded against the interests of the Union becoming involved with those of the Spanish American states. At last the Administration saw victory, in the confirmation of its envoys. However the delay proved fatal as the Congress had already adjourned when they reached Panama.

Perhaps it was as well that failure came in the way it

did since the time was not ripe for the consummation of Clay's plans. But the disappointment to Clay must have been keen, and all the greater, since he realized that the opposition was less because of the measure, than because the measure was his, or his and Adams's.

The campaign of 1828 began almost before that of 1824 was ended. The legislature of Tennessee renominated Jackson, and he resigned his seat in the Senate that he might be free to be a candidate for president. The whole of Adams's administration, therefore, was practically one long campaign. Few measures were decided on their merits; most were discussed from the standpoint of their influence on the next election. Adams was proposed as his own successor, but Clay was not for that reason allowed to escape attack. The campaign was one that cannot be looked back upon by an American with pleasure. Personalities were the chief stock in trade. Adams was maligned. Jackson was attacked in his private life, as well as for his public acts. Clay became involved in the charges and counter charges.

Clay replied in a speech at Lexington to the charge of corruption in the election of 1825, in so able a manner, that letters came to him from all over the Union of a tenor similar to one of Webster's in which he said, "You speak very modestly of recent events, in which you have borne so successful a part. I cannot think General Jackson will ever recover from the blow he has received." Mr. Letcher refers to the letter of Mr. Buchanan concerning the charge as if it practically settled the election; for he says, "I am greatly gratified with the result, and

must believe it will have a happy effect upon the Presidential election. It is impossible it should turn out otherwise. Virginia, after this, will not—cannot support the General.” But the result proved that Clay could not prevent the election of Jackson; and that Clay’s friends as well, failed to understand the strength of the popular movement for Jackson. The event which hurt Clay most of all was that his own beloved state of Kentucky had given its vote to Jackson. How deeply this grieved him may be seen from his letter to his friend Adam Beatty:

‘From the information which your letter communicates. . . . there is reason to apprehend that the vote of Kentucky has been given to General Jackson. Without that event, there is but too much probability of his election. To this decision of the people of the United States, patriotism and religion both unite in enjoining submission and resignation. For one, I shall endeavor to perform that duty. As a private citizen, and as a lover of liberty, I shall ever deeply deplore it. And the course of my own state, . . . will mortify and distress me. I hope, nevertheless, that I shall find myself able to sustain with composure the shock of this event, and every other trial to which I shall be destined.’

To Mr. Niles he writes, “My health and my spirits, too, have been better, since the event was known, than they were many weeks before. And yet all my opinions are unchanged and unchangeable, about the dangers of the precedent which we have established. The military principle has triumphed, and triumphed in the person of



one devoid of all the graces, elegances, and magnanimity, of the accomplished men of the profession." These extracts show how keenly Clay felt the defeat of Adams in this election; or perhaps, better, they show how greatly he was distressed at the triumph of Jackson.

On retiring from the office of Secretary of State, March 1829, Clay could not refrain from emphasizing the above idea in a speech at a banquet which was given to him by his friends. Again in a great speech at Lexington, he took occasion to affirm that an error had been made in electing a man to the presidency who wished to rule on military principles; and whose first act had been to fill the important places in the governmental service on the principle that to the "victors belong the spoils." He closed this speech with a reference to himself which shows how constantly the charge of corruption kept rankling in his mind.

"I have doubtless committed many faults and indiscretions, over which you have thrown the broad mantle of your charity. But I can say, and in the presence of my God and this assembled multitude, I will say, that I have honestly and faithfully served my country; that I have never wronged it; and that, however unprepared I lament that I am to appear in the Divine presence on other accounts, I invoke the stern justice of his judgment on my public conduct, without the smallest apprehension of his displeasure."

At this time Clay seemed to feel that he had finished his public career, and was content to retire to his farm and his family. That he was sincere is seen in the fact that

he declined to be returned to the House, and rejected the suggestion that he should go to the Kentucky legislature. Yet scarcely a year passed till we find him making a political pilgrimage through the south; and in 1831 he entered the senate of the United States, where he strove with Webster and Calhoun for leadership in that body when it was at the zenith of its fame. For eleven years he remained in the senate. During this period, he was once a candidate for president; and, later in 1840, he sought the nomination from the Whigs in vain; for, on the ground of availability, it went to Harrison, a man vastly his inferior in mental ability, and in real qualifications for the office.

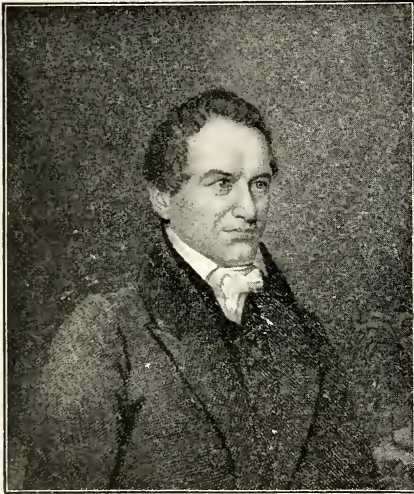
However it was during these years that Clay reached the height of his power. Yet it seemed that fate was ever against him. In one way or another he was prevented from testing his theories in actual measures. When Congress was with him Jackson as president blocked his way. Later when the House was won he was in a minority in the Senate. Finally in 1841, House, Senate and President were all seemingly in harmony with him. He outlined his plans. He went to Washington full of hope. At last he could press his measures to a test. But this time the frailty of human life balked his plans; for, only one month after his inauguration Harrison died. Tyler became president, only to quarrel with Clay, and to veto many of his pet measures. Clay strove for a year, and finally saw two of his plans successful, one negative the other positive. The Sub-Treasury law was repealed; and a moderately protect-

ive tariff act was placed on the statute book. But the bank act which was to crown the work, as Clay believed, was defeated; and his land bill rested among the acts slain by Tyler's veto pen. Feeling that his work was done, and longing also for rest and home Clay resigned in 1842. His farewell speech to the Senate was dramatic in its form and in its occasion. Although he had had many sharp and bitter contests with senators, now that the moment of parting had come, the high place which he held in their estimation was seen. It is said that few eyes were dry as Clay's farewell words fell from his eloquent lips.

But let us study those years more in detail, to try to find out and judge of the merit of the measures that Clay struggled so hard to put into the form of laws, or to prevent from going on the statute book.

One of the first questions that demanded Clay's attention on his entrance again into the Senate pertained to the management of the public land. There was a movement on foot to withdraw all public lands from market for a time. The great debate in 1830 between Webster and Hayne had originated in a resolution of Senator Foote of Connecticut to have a committee appointed to consider the advisability of such a measure. The discussion opened up the whole question of the States Right doctrine, and various propositions were brought before Congress. Some would give the lands to the states; others would sell them to the states in which they lay at a merely nominal sum. The question had become in part an issue also between the eastern and western sec-

tions of the Union. Thus the greatest questions of the day were involved in the settlement of the land problem. In this condition of affairs the whole subject was referred to the committee of Manufacturers of which Clay was



Robert Y. Hayne.  
Born Nov. 10, 1791. Died Sept. 24, 1841.

chairman. It must be remembered that at this time, 1832, Clay was a candidate for the presidency, hence it was presumed that any report he could make would injure him in some section of the Union. We must also note that his committee was not the natural one to which to refer such a measure. Evidently we may con-

clude that it was sent to his committee for political purposes. Clay did not hesitate to grapple with the problem; he proved his courage at least, whether his report was marked by the highest statesmanship or not. The committee reported against lowering the price of the land which had been fixed at \$1.25 per acre by the law of 1820, and against ceding the land to the states; but it favored distributing the proceeds of the sale of the lands

among the states, after reserving ten per cent of the receipts to be distributed among the new states. Clay here began his struggle for the distribution of the proceeds of the land sales among the states, a struggle which he never abandoned till he left the senate in 1842, unable to secure its adoption. Evidently there was a close relationship in Clay's mind between land-sale distribution and the tariff. The revenues of the government during these years were in excess of its needs. A reduction of income must be found somewhere.

Clay did not claim the constitutional right to tax, to collect revenue from the people with one hand in order to get an income that the national government might in turn distribute it with the other hand to the states. However, he did insist that the income from the land sales might be so disposed of, and in that way the revenue of the government be lessened. The only alternative to this policy would be to reduce the duty on imports. The latter measure was the one desired by the free-trader, and by the revenue reformer. Clay held out against it and, in 1832, succeeded in securing the passage of a tariff law which was strongly protective in its effects. The passage of this law was made the occasion for South Carolina to pass her resolutions of nullification. All Clay's writings both public and private, as well as his speeches, show that he was opposed to the doctrine as set forth by South Carolina. In his great speech on Nullification he used the following language:

“In cases where there are two systems of government, operating at the same time and place, over the same peo-

ple, the one general, the other local or particular, one system or the other must possess the right to decide upon the extent of the powers, in cases of collision which are claimed by the general government. No third party of sufficient impartiality, weight and responsibility, other than such a tribunal as a supreme court, has yet been devised, or perhaps can be created. The doctrine of one side is that the general government though limited in its nature, must necessarily possess the power to ascertain what authority it has and, by consequence, the extent of that authority."

"The South Carolina doctrine, on the other side, is, that that state has the right to determine the limits of the powers granted to the general government: and that whenever any of its acts transcend those limits, in the opinion of the state of South Carolina, she is competent to annul them. It is admitted that the South Carolina doctrine is liable to abuse; but it is contended, that the patriotism of each state is an adequate security, and that the nullifying power would only be exercised, in an extraordinary case where the powers reserved to the states, under the constitution, are usurped by the federal government. And is not the patriotism of all the states, as great a safeguard against the assumption of powers, not conferred upon the general government, as the patriotism of one state is against the denial of powers which are clearly granted?" However he loved the Union above all things, and he therefore stood ready to compromise that the need to use force might not occur. For this reason mainly, I believe it may be said, Clay

introduced the compromise tariff bill of 1833. To be sure in his argument he urged that the measure was necessary to save the protective system from immediate destruction. He also argued that protection would perhaps not be needed by 1842 when the principal reduction in the rate of duty was to be made. Yet when we have made these concessions, it still remains true that the preservation of the Union was the main factor as may be seen from his speeches and letters. In one he says:

“If there be any who want civil war, I am not one of them. I wish to see war of no kind; but above all I do not desire to see civil war. When a civil war shall be lightened up in the bosom of our own happy land, and armies are marching, and commanders are winning their victories, and fleets are in motion on our coast, tell me, if you can . . . its duration.

“In conclusion, allow me to entreat and implore each individual member of this body to bring into the consideration of this measure, which I have had the honor of proposing, the same love of country, which, if I know myself, has actuated me, and the same desire of restoring harmony to the Union which has prompted this effort.”

This bill was supported by Calhoun, and thus the nullifiers joined with Clay and the compromisers to settle the question at immediate issue. South Carolina repealed her resolutions and acts of nullification, while Congress passed the so-called “Force Bill” to assert its authority. Jackson, as a result of his course, strengthened his position with the north especially, while Clay

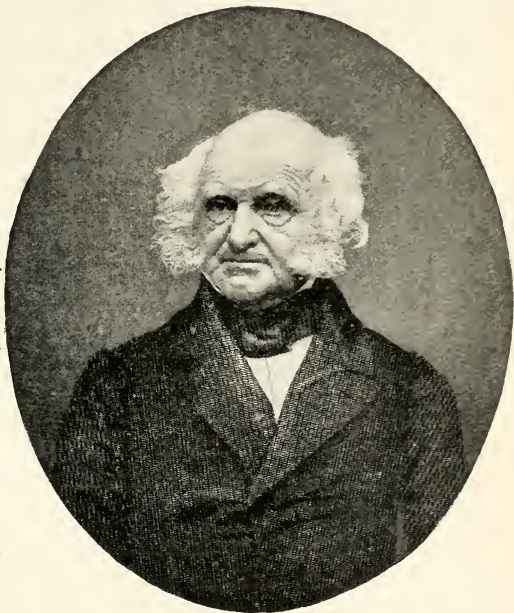
strengthened his right to the title of the "Great Compromiser."

Thus while Clay was ready to compromise on the tariff for the sake of the Union, there was one subject on which he never would consent to lower his flag. The national bank called forth all the resources of his brain and tongue. He forced the issue of its recharter into the campaign of 1832, and lost. If Jackson at that time had concluded not to push his opposition to the bank further, the making the question an issue in the campaign determined him to secure its destruction. When, July 4, 1832, the recharter bill came before Jackson he did not hesitate, although it was known that a large section of his own party were enlisted on the side of the bank. Jackson's veto message of the 10th of July appealed to the people to come to his aid in his great struggle for their rights against the giant bank monopoly. The leaders might hesitate to follow him, but the great common people did not. The result of the election was the overwhelming defeat of Clay and the bank. Jackson seized upon this so-called verdict of the people to push the bank to its destruction. His own officers must follow his lead. When McLane hesitated to remove the government deposits from the vaults of the bank, another place was found for him, and Duane was made his successor as Secretary of the Treasury. When the latter refused to remove the deposits, although Jackson had assumed the responsibility for the act, he was promptly removed and Taney appointed in his place. Oct. 1, 1833, the bank ceased to receive any more funds of the



United States, and by March of the following year, it ceased to have any of the government revenue in its possession.

Clay opposed Jackson in all these measures in the most powerful way; but, although joined by Webster and Calhoun, as well as by many former friends of Jackson, it was of no avail. The people were with Jackson. Perhaps the keenest criticism that can be made upon Clay during these



Martin Van Buren. Eighth President of the U. S.  
Born 1782. Died 1862.

years is that he was only a negative force. When he saw that the people had pronounced against the then existing banking system, he had nothing to propose in its stead. He struggled for its restoration till 1842; then, after his failure, due to Tyler's veto, he turned to other subjects, recognizing that his pet meas-

ure could not again, soon at least, be able to obtain a favorable hearing from the American people.

In Van Buren's administration it was proposed to substitute the Independent Treasury for the National Bank. Clay opposed the plan, and predicted dire disaster to the country should it be adopted. In 1840 the measure became a law, only, to be repealed the next year when the Whigs under Clay's and Harrison's leadership came into power. In 1846 when the Democrats again triumphed the system was reestablished, and exists today with few opponents. Clay's predictions remain unfulfilled. It is to be noted in general that during these years Clay failed to move with the progress of events. He stood for an earlier policy, and opposed nearly all plans that marked an innovating spirit. His remedy for the ills of the crisis of 1837 was to return to the bank, to protection, to the distribution of the income from land sales among the states; and as we have seen he urged the repeal of the Sub-Treasury plans of managing the governmental revenues.

Gradually the slavery issue forced itself to the front. Clay's location as well as his disposition made him a compromiser. He opposed the Abolitionists and insisted that they were endangering the Union by their course. The petitions which came to Congress regarding slavery in the District of Columbia seemed to Clay to be dangerous, and unnecessary. While he did not deny the constitutional right of Congress to legislate on the subject, he held that to do so would be violating an implied promise to Maryland and Virginia when they ceded the

District. On the other hand Clay would not go with the extremists of the south, in denying the Right of Petition. He opposed the policy pursued by the extremists in both sections, and tried to put a restraining hand on each. He denied *in toto* the right of the nation to interfere with slavery in the states; and affirmed that the slave-master had a right to his property, and that each state was free to act as it pleased.

If the question, he once said, was concerning the introduction of slaves, "No man in it would oppose their admission with more determined resolution and conscientious repugnance than I should." But he adds: "What is best to be done for their happiness and our own, now that they are here?" "In the slave states the alternative is that the white man must govern the black, or the black govern the white." It was this thought that seems to have dominated Clay's instinctive love of liberty.

Clay was not always consistent in his arguments on this question. He wished to have the free negroes colonized in Africa, and supported the colonization society for that reason. Yet he in one breath said that they are the off-scouring of society, and in the next that they would carry religion and civilization back with them to Africa. In arguing for this society he said:

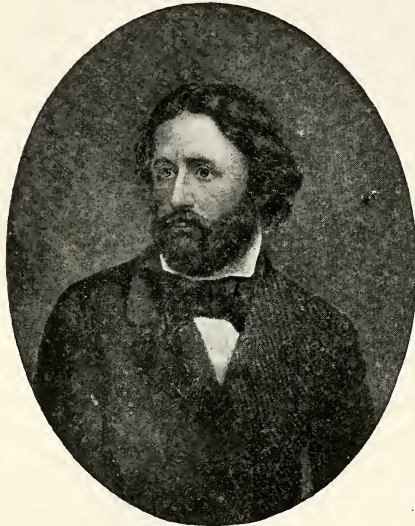
"This society is well aware, I repeat, that they cannot touch the subject of slavery." . . . "Of all descriptions of our population, that of the free colored, taken in the aggregate, is the least prolific, because of the checks arising from vice and want." . . . "If I could be in-

strumental in eradicating this deepest stain upon the character of the country, and removing all cause of reproach on account of it, by foreign nations; if I could only be instrumental in ridding of this foul blot that revered state that gave me birth, or that not less beloved state which kindly adopted me as her son; I would not exchange the proud satisfaction which I should enjoy, for the honor of all the triumphs even decreed to the most successful conqueror." . . . "There is a moral fitness in the idea of returning to Africa her children, whose ancestors have been torn from her by the ruthless hand of fraud and violence. Transplanted in a foreign land, they will carry back to their native soil the rich fruits of religion, civilization, law, and liberty." . . . "Of all classes of our population, the most vicious is that of the free colored. It is the inevitable result of their moral, political, and civil degradation. Contaminated themselves, they extend their vices to all around them, to the slaves and the whites. If the principle of colonization should be confined to them; if a colony can be firmly established and successfully continued in Africa which should draw off annually an amount of that portion of our population equal to its annual increase, much good will be done." . . . "Every emigrant to Africa is a missionary carrying with him credentials in the holy cause of civilization, religion, and free institutions. We are reproached with doing mischief by the agitation of this question. The society goes into no household to disturb its domestic tranquility; it addresses itself to no slaves to weaken their obligations of obedience. It seeks

to affect no man's property. It has neither the power nor the will to affect the property of any one contrary to his consent. The execution of its scheme would augment instead of diminish the value of the property left behind."

There was no hesitation in 1844 in giving Clay the nomination for president. The Whigs had as they believed been betrayed by Tyler, so now they would nominate the great leader of their party, as they ought to have done in 1840. No doubt many factors entered into the result. Two however seem to have turned the scale against Clay. For the last time Jackson entered the field, and revived the old cry of "bargain and corruption." This old charge again confronted Clay. Again he proved its falsity, but doubtless thousands believed Jackson. The other factor was Clay's own. He was opposed at heart to the annexation of Texas, and had said so in a straight-forward manner. But during the campaign to try to save votes or to secure votes in the south, he was enticed into writing some six letters, the first explaining his views, and the others attempting to explain the explanation. Those who were influenced at all were in the north. Polk could under no circumstances have been deprived of a vote in the south, for both were radically for annexation. In the north, however, when it became evident that Clay was attempting to hedge, disaster was certain. The campaign in his cause flagged, Greeley says, from the moment his letters appeared. Silence might have given him Michigan and New York and the presidency. His letters were factors

at least in losing both. For the next few years Clay was only an interested spectator of the exciting drama that was playing at Washington. He viewed the struggle over the institutions of the territories with alarm. The



John C. Fremont, "The Pathfinder of the Rockies."  
Born 1813. Died 1890.

Wilmot Proviso, and the debate it aroused caused him to fear again for his beloved Union. By 1849 it seemed that the hour of danger had come. Oregon was organized as a territory with slavery excluded. Every sign pointed to the admission of California as a free state, but perhaps only at the cost of secession and war. The

south felt that the Mexican war had been fought largely by its sons, and now for the results of the war to strengthen the power of the free states seemed to it insufferable. At the best it was willing to compromise only by extending the line  $36^{\circ} 30'$  to the Pacific.

At this juncture Clay was persuaded to return to the Senate. He came back longing to reconcile the north and the south. To him the slavery issue was not so im-

portant as to those farther north or farther south. He held slaves, but he could see them freed with equanimity; so he could not understand those from the extreme south who felt that their whole life was absorbed in the continued existence of the slave system. He did not feel that social, industrial and political institutions were practically based on its continuance. In short he could not understand why they should wish to break the Union, if they were prevented from extending the system into at least a part of the new territory. But if he could not understand the south, still less could he realize the point of view of the north. Why the northern people should press the issue so as to irritate and madden the south he could not understand. The question to them was only a moral abstraction. They had no slaves. They were in no wise responsible for the existence of slavery. Each state determined that question for itself. Thus it was that Clay was unable to put himself fully in the place of either north or south. What was slavery anyway compared to the Union? In this state of mind, he came, I believe, to Washington. A compromise would settle the question again as it had before. Clay seemed to believe it would settle it forever. He proposed a plan. It finally passed Congress and became known as the "Compromise of 1850," the "finality" compromise. In one sense Clay had not mistaken the temper of the people. The majority both north and south were ready to yield something for the sake of Union.

Clay did not live to know that his "finality" measure proved to be only a temporary makeshift. He died in

1852, at the moment when both the great parties had placed on their banners the promise of faithfulness to his great Compromise. We may believe that Clay had no conception that in less than ten years from that time a million men from north and south would confront each other with arms in hands, to fight out the great issue that he supposed he had settled, perhaps, for all time.

Of Clay then we may conclude: He was a man of wonderful personality and power. His voice and presence charmed all who came within their influence. On the whole he was not a creative statesman, yet he was ready with measures for the day. His mind was that of one who stood ready to compromise, and his great work in our history perhaps was to postpone the day of settlement of the slavery question till it could be settled right, and yet preserve the Union. This last word was the dearest of all to him, and his career, though marked with faults and weaknesses, was never untrue to it. As he himself said, he could challenge the judgment of God on his public acts, and could feel that he would not there be found wanting.



**ANECDOTES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF HENRY CLAY.**

## CLAY AT FIFTEEN.

Roland Thomas, senior clerk in the office in which Clay became a copyist, at the age of fifteen, has left us this description of Clay's appearance the day he began his work.

"His face was not handsome; his manners were not entirely uncouth, but it was supposed that he was to be the butt of ridicule. It was soon seen however that he had a keen tongue, and the laughter was turned to admiration. He was dressed in a new suit of Figginy (Virginia) cloth, cotton and silk mixed, complexion of pepper and salt, with clean linen well starched, and the tail of his coat standing out from his legs at an angle of forty-five degrees, like that of a dragoon."

Mr. Thomas adds that Clay was an earnest student at night and odd moments; that he never, at this time, went out at night for pleasure.

## CLAY AND BURR.

Burr gave the following written paper to Clay before Clay would undertake his defence when he was charged with treason, by Col. Daviess, the United States Attorney, 1806.

"He [Burr] had no design to intermeddle with, or disturb the tranquility of the United States, or its territories, nor any part of them. He had neither issued nor signed, nor promised a commission, to any person, for any purpose. He did not own a single musket, nor bayonet, nor any single article of military stores, nor did

any other person for him, by his authority or knowledge. His views had been explained to several distinguished members of the administration, were well understood and approved by the government. They were such as every man of honor, and every good citizen, must approve. He considered this declaration proper as well to counteract the chimerical tales circulated by the malevolence of his enemies, as to satisfy Mr. Clay, that he had not become the counsel of a man in any way unfriendly to the laws, the government, or the well being of his country."

J. Q. ADAMS.

*The Aurora* of 1808 contains an article from which *The Reporter* of Lexington quotes the following extract. It mirrors the feelings of the people of Kentucky, as they conceived the New England Federalist of that day.

"Mr. J. Q. Adams has committed an offence inexpiable against *the friends of a union between Gt. B. and the eastern states*. In order to reign over the people as satraps, there is a faction in the eastern states willing to subvert the union: *Mr. Adams* has had the honesty to *repel, resist* and expose them; and he is removed from the senate. He has, in his removal, the consolation of a virtuous man, and the applause of his country, while those who would betray their country to the flagitious designs of Gt. B., already meet the national execration."

WAR OF 1812 IN NEW YORK.

*The New York Evening Post*, is quoted in the *National Intelligencer*, of May 12, 1812, as using this language in regard to their position on the War.

“Mr. Clay and his western brethren may make light of our cities being laid in ashes followed by a flight to Kentucky and Ohio, but we shall take the liberty to think for ourselves, as well as to feel for ourselves, to deliberate for ourselves and to determine for ourselves. We tell them plainly that *we will not go to war*; we will not abandon our cities; we will not take flight to the westward. And, now, *let them try their power over us as soon as they please.*”

## CLAY'S FIRST BANK SPEECH.

*The Argus of Western America*, a Kentucky paper, quotes this comment from the *Whig*, on Clay's great speech against the Bank, on Feb. 15, 1811.

“Mr. Clay, of Kentucky, chained the attention of the Senate, and of the crowded galleries to a speech of about an hour and twenty minutes continuance, abounding in strong and prespicious argument, and in stubborn facts, pronounced in the most natural and emphatic manner. Such a display of forceful oratory I have never witnessed in a legislative body, and, if I decline the attempt to report from mere recollection an accurate sketch of this matchless oration; if my *memory* was deluded to do homage to my *admiration* the merit of the speech will be found an ample excuse for my delinquency.”

## FEDERALIST ESTIMATE OF CLAY, 1815.

The *Examiner* of Sept. 13, 1815, contains this estimate of Clay. From this article one may form a very good idea of the amenities of journalism at that time.

“We are at length recovered from the fascination of

the heroic manners of *Harry Clay*; and we have ceased to contemplate with enthusiastic rapture 'the *human face divine*,' which adorns the forepart of the head of Albert Gallatin.

"Of Mr. Clay's vehemence in favor of that war which was to establish the absolute intactability of neutral commerce. . . little now need be said. His utter disappointment in these matters, sufficiently proves, that although he may rank high, in the order of bawling patriots, he has shown himself utterly destitute of that sober, practical wisdom, which distinguishes the real statesman from the vociferous demagogue. . . To him *honor* seemed to consist in being an *ambassador*; not in being consistent and inflexible. . . .

"But I cannot forbear to ask what mighty service this gentleman has rendered his country? He was certainly never so famous for elegant composition, as Stump Orator." [He states that] "*a great object of the war has been attained in the firm establishment of the national character.* Is this true? Or *is it false?* Federalists! Democrats! On your consciences is it true or is it *false?* . . . It was reserved for Mr. Clay to cap the climax of absurdity and falsehood, by saying that the establishment of the national character was a great object of the war. The assertion is not true. There is not an idiot in the country who can be persuaded it is true. Mr. Clay knew it was not true."

#### CLAY AND LAFAYETTE.

In 1824 at the time of LaFayette's visit to the United



Henry Clay Addressing the U. S. Senate in 1850.

States, Clay delivered the welcoming address in the House of Representatives:

“The vain wish has been sometimes indulged that Providence would allow the patriot, after death, to return to his own country, and to contemplate the intermediate changes which had taken place—to view the forests felled, the cities built, the mountains leveled, the canals cut, the high-ways constructed, the progress of the arts, the advancement of learning, and the increase of population. General, your present visit to the United States is a realization of the consoling object of that wish. You are in the midst of posterity. Everywhere you must have been struck with the great changes, physical and moral, which have occurred since you left us. Even this very city, bearing a venerated name, alike endeared to you and to us, has since emerged from the forests which then covered its site. In one respect you find us unaltered, and that is in the sentiment of continued devotion to liberty, and of ardent affection and profound gratitude to your departed friend, the Father of his country; and to you, and to your illustrious associates in the field and in the cabinet, for the multiplied blessings which surround us, and for the very privilege of addressing you, which I now exercise. This sentiment, now fondly cherished by more than ten millions of people, will be transmitted, with unabated vigor, down the tide of time, through the countless millions who are destined to inhabit this continent, to the latest posterity.”

CLAY TO HIS NEIGHBORS, 1829.

The following extract from an address to his constitu-

ents, in 1829, when he returned from Washington, after retiring from the position of Secretary of State, shows us, in part, at least, the qualities which gave him such a powerful hold on his neighbors, who were ever and always his friends. Some one has said that the nearer one got to Lexington, Kentucky, the stronger he found the hold that Clay had on the people.

“And now, my friends and fellow-citizens, I cannot part from you, on possibly this last occasion of my ever publicly addressing you, without reiterating the expression of my thanks from a heart overflowing with gratitude. I came among you, now more than thirty years ago, an orphan boy, penniless, a stranger to you all, without friends, without the favor of the great. You took me up, cherished me, caressed me, protected me, honored me. You have constantly poured upon me a bold and unabated stream of innumerable favors. Time, which wears out everything, has increased and strengthened your affection for me. When I seemed deserted by almost the whole world, and assailed by almost every tongue and pen and press, you have fearlessly and manfully stood by me, with unsurpassed zeal and undiminished friendship. When I felt as if I should sink beneath the storm of abuse and destruction, which was violently raging around me, I have found myself upheld and sustained by your encouraging voices and your approving smiles. I have doubtless committed many faults and indiscretions, over which you have thrown the broad mantle of your charity.”

## DESCRIPTION OF CLAY.

Reverend Robt. J. Breckenridge, in an oration on laying the corner-stone of the Clay monument, at Lexington, gives this estimate of Clay and his power.

“It is in the midst of such progress, through such a development, to such a result, that this man, confessedly so great as an orator, a lawyer, a politician, a parliamentary leader, must vindicate to himself the still higher title of a great statesman. Two things may be confidently asserted as the basis of his claim to a title so august. The first is that of all the statesmen of his age, he most prominently carved a policy for his country; a policy to adopt which, or to reject which, made the system of other statesmen. . . . From 1811 to 1852. . . . it cannot be denied that the opinion of Henry Clay was an important element in the fate of every important question of national policy. The other fact is still more honorable to his name, still more conclusive of his true greatness. To whatever cause we may see fit to attribute it, whether to his patriotism, to his justice, his sagacity, his love of fairness, his ambition, the fact is still unquestionable, that of all the statesmen of the day, he was held by the common voice of mankind to be the most impartial. Impartial in striving to arrange all conflicting interests, impartial in seeking to adjust all threatening difficulties, impartial in settling the boundaries of power and right, impartial in his great spirit, in his wide intelligence, and in his dauntless conduct.” . . .

“Honest in all things, truthful always; to deceive, to prevaricate, to act unfairly—the refuge of base, timid,



and feeble natures—no more entered into his thoughts in the high and difficult emergencies of life, than in the daily round of his commonest duties. His was a fair, high, brave, upright nature.” . . .

“There was nothing distorted about his nature—nothing out of sympathy with his times—nothing that could make him, or any one else, feel that he was not a man of the very living generation. He was not a common,—on the other hand he was a grand specimen, but yet he was a real and faithful specimen of a man, of an American, of a Kentuckian.”

#### CAMPAIGN SONGS.

In 1844 the “National Clay Melodist” was prepared. The songs are the purest doggerel, but a few selections will help us to an insight into the campaign of that year. The book was dedicated with the following quotation from one of Clay’s letters.

“I have wished the good opinion of the world, but I defy the most malignant of my enemies to show that I have attempted to gain it by any low or groveling acts, by any mean or unworthy sacrifice, by the violation of any of the obligations of honor or by a breach of any of the duties which I owed my country.”

#### DID YOU EVER HEAR OF THE FARMER.

“Did ever you hear of the farmer  
 Who lives up in the West?  
 Of all the men for President  
 The wisest and the best,  
 To put him in the capitol  
 We’ve found a capital way.

Oh! we'll sing a Harry Clay song by night,  
And beat his foes by day."

"Come all, of every station,  
The rich as well as poor;  
For all the farmer had a place,  
Who ever sought his door:  
He ever had an open hand,  
Nor turned the poor away;  
Oh! we'll sing a Harry Clay song by night,  
And beat his foes by day."

#### VAN CAN'T COME IT.

"When pumpkins shall grow on the top of a steeple,  
And showers of pancakes shall fall with the rain;  
When Benton and Tyler can humbug the people,  
Van Buren may come back to power again."

.....

"When camels shall creep through the eye of a needle,  
And dunces confess themselves minus in brain;  
When rogues cannot cheat us nor parasites wheedle,  
Van Buren may come back to power again."

#### COME! UP WITH THE BANNER.

"Come! up with the banner  
Of good Harry Clay,  
Who in peace and in war,  
Was his country's firm stay;  
Spread it wide to the breeze;  
We'er freemen who rear it;  
And whate'er its fate be,  
We'll willingly share it.  
We are some of the lads who in '40 were true  
To the gallant Old Hero of Tippecanoe."

"For cute Van and Calhoun,  
We care little or nought;  
They spread their own snares,  
And in these they are caught,

They're for tariff—no tariff,  
 This, that thing, and t'other,  
 And so much, and nothing,  
 That they honest men bother,  
 We are some of the lads, &c."

CLAY'S EARLY VIEWS ON SLAVERY.

I cannot get any absolute proof that the following letter in the *Kentucky Gazette* of April 25, 1798, is Clay's, as it is signed "Scaevola," yet I am morally certain of it.

It is an appeal to the voters of Kentucky to send delegates to the Constitutional Convention favorable to the views set forth in it. After discussing at some length the need of a general revision of the Constitution he says:—

"It is not however true that the people of Kentucky are contented and happy under the present government. The vote of so large a number in favor of a convention at the last election, and the present stir in the country, prove the contrary. Can any humane man be happy and contented when he sees nearly thirty thousand of his fellow beings around him, deprived of all the rights which make life desirable, transferred like cattle from the possession of one to another; when he sees the trembling slave under the hammer, surrounded by a number of eager purchasers, and feeling all the emotions which arise when one is uncertain into whose tyrannical hands he must next fall; when he beholds the anguish and hears the piercing cries of husbands separated from wives and children from parents; when in a word, all the tender and endearing ties of nature are broken assunder and

disregarded; and when he reflects that no gradual mode of emancipation is adopted either for those slaves or for their posterity, doubling their numbers every twenty-five years. To suppose the people of Kentucky, enthusiasts as they are in the cause of liberty, could be contented and happy under circumstances like these, would be insulting their good sense. . . . .

“In addition to other misrepresentations to which the enemies to a convention, despairing of success by a fair mode of reasoning, have had recourse, they have addressed themselves insidiously to the fears of the slaveholders, and held out as the object of the friends to the constitution are immediate and unqualified liberation of the slaves. However just such a measure might be, it certainly has never been the intention of any one to attempt it; and the only motive in ascribing it to them has been to awaken the prejudices, and to mislead the judgment of the public. But it is the wish of some of them that a gradual emancipation should be adopted. All America acknowledges the existence of slavery to be an evil, which while it deprives the slave of the best gift of heaven, in the end injures the master too, by laying waste his land, enabling him to live indolently, and thus contracting all the vices generated by a state of idleness. If it be this enormous evil, the sooner we attempt its destruction the better. It is a subject that has been so generally canvassed by the public, that it is unnecessary to repeat all the reasons which urge to a conventional interference. It is sufficient that we are satisfied of this much, that the article prohibiting the legislature

from making any provision for it [emancipation] should be expunged, and another introduced either applying the remedy itself, or authorizing the legislature at any subsequent period to do it.

There can be no danger in vesting this power in them, and there will be a number of them who will themselves hold slaves. The legislature of Virginia possesses this power without abusing it."

In the last part of the article "Scaevola" argued that a state senate was a useless body, hence he proposed that the new convention should provide for only one house in the legislature.

#### CLAY'S DUELS.

In accordance with the custom of the times Clay fought in two duels, and was ready for at least two more which were finally amicably arranged by mutual friends of the parties.

The first duel was fought with Humphrey Marshall early in 1809. The following extracts from *The Reporter*, a Lexington, Kentucky, newspaper give us a vivid picture of the condition of the times.

General Riffe was a member of the Kentucky House of Representatives, when Marshall gave the insult. Clay resented it on the spot, and attempted to attack Marshall, "but Riffe who sat between them, a tall muscular man, seized each with one hand, and held them apart, saying earnestly, 'Come poys, no fighting here, I whips you poth.' " Jan. 4, 1809 Clay sent the following letter:

"H. MARSHALL, ESQ., Present,

Sir: After the occurrences in the house of representatives on this day, the receipt of this note will excite with you no surprise. I hope on my part I shall not be disappointed in the execution of the pledge you gave on that occasion, and in your disclaimer of the character attributed to you. To enable you to fulfill these reasonable and just expectations, my friend Major Campbell is authorized by me to adjust the ceremonies proper to the observed.

I am, sir, yours &c.,

HENRY CLAY."

On the same day the following reply was sent.

"H. CLAY, ESQ., Frankfort,

Sir: Your note of this date was handed me by Major Campbell. The object is understood; and without designing to notice the insinuation it contains as to character, the necessary arrangements are, on my part, submitted to my friend, Col. Moore,

Yours &c.,

H. MARSHALL."

These rules were agreed upon to be observed by Clay and Marshall on the duelling ground:—

1. "Each gentleman will take his station at ten paces distant from the other, and will stand as may suit his choice, with his arms hanging down, and after the words, Attention! Fire! being given both may fire at their leisure.

2. "A snap or flash shall be equivalent to a fire.

3. "If one should fire before the other, he who fires first, shall stand in the position in which he was when he fired, except that he may let his arms fall down by his side.

4. "A violation of the above rules by either of the parties (accidents excepted) shall subject the offender to instant death.

JOHN B. CAMPBELL.

JAMES F. MOORE."

Three shots were fired. Marshall was slightly wounded on the first, and Clay somewhat severely on the third fire. The seconds in their "official" report note that Clay "insisted on another fire very ardently."

As the duel arose over a debate concerning the principle of protection, it has been said that Clay "fought and bled" for the idea which dominated so much of his thinking.

In 1812 Randolph accused Clay of unfairness in his actions as Speaker, and became very violent in his language. In reply to a letter, Langdon Chens wrote to Clay as follows:

"You ask me 'what notice you ought to take of Randolph's reply?' Certainly none, none whatever. . . . I think as the question stands, you have entirely the advantage of the *argument*; and I think you would egregiously err, as the Speaker of the House of Representatives (it would be entirely different were it a question between Mr. Clay and Mr. Randolph) to put it on any other footing than that of argument. . . .

"I have not a doubt of your willingness to put the question personally on any footing whatever, that might be deemed proper. But any such notice of it on your part would be most inexcusably wrong."

One is happy to add that Clay followed the advice given, and it was not until 1825 that the Clay-Randolph duel took place. At that time Randolph said of the political alliance of Adams and Clay that it was the "Union of the Puritan and the Blackleg, &c." For this Clay issued a challenge for which he ever after expressed contrition.

There are varying accounts of this duel. Gen. James Hamilton, Randolph's second, states that Randolph fired in the air, and not at Clay. He says:—"On the word being given, Mr. Clay fired without effect, Mr. Randolph discharging his pistol in the air. The moment Mr. Clay saw that Mr. Randolph had thrown away his fire, with a gush of sensibility, he instantly approached Randolph

and said, with an emotion I can never forget—"I trust in God, my dear Sir, you are untouched; after what has occurred I would not have harmed you for a thousand worlds.'" Mr. Randolph had beforehand communicated to his second his intention "not to return Mr. Clay's fire; nothing shall induce me to harm a hair of his head. I will not make his wife a widow, nor his children orphans. Their tears would be shed over his grave; but when the sod of Virginia rests on my bosom, there is not, in this wide world, one individual to pay this tribute upon mine."



John Randolph.

In 1853, Gen. Jesup, who had been Clay's second, in a letter to Clay's son, James, gives a somewhat different version. He states that Randolph shot at Clay the first round, and threw away his second shot. Randolph's pistol went off accidentally before the command had been given. For that reason Gen. Jesup makes Randolph speak and act as follows: " 'Mr. Clay, I came upon the ground determined not to fire at you, but the unfortunate discharge of my pistol, . . . for a moment changed my mind.' They sprang forward as if by a common impulse, and grasped each other by the hand, each expressing the pleasure he felt that the other was unhurt."

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Clay in his private letters condemned himself, his acts, and the custom. In his later years he acted in accordance with his professions.

#### CLAY AND THE PEOPLE.

Henry Clay was a great admirer of crowds. Webster, Benton or Calhoun would cross the street to avoid one, but Clay would cross the street to meet one or mingle with one. He seemed to be personally acquainted with every one, and he seemed to act as if every one knew him. Congressman Wentworth says "Seldom did any body of men come out in the evening with a musical band that Mr. Clay was not serenaded, and he was ready for a short speech to send the men home with a hurrah. I never knew men with a band of music to call on any one of the others."

The people of the whole country seemed to take delight in sending Mr. Clay articles of all kinds for food and drink. The proprietor of the National Hotel where he roomed used to exhibit to strangers what he called Mr. Clay's store-room. In it was game of all kinds, fruits and wines. From these stores he would often supply not only the table of his own guests, but also the table of the guests of the hotel. On one occasion it is recorded by Mr. Wentworth that wine from Cincinnati was passed around, and as it went from guest to guest Mr. Clay discoursed of the need of protection so that the home industry might be built up. "Persons who had never heard Mr. Clay before, became so infatuated with the earnestness and eloquence of his language, that they

moved their chairs to him, and the crowd became so dense around him, that he suggested an adjournment to the ladies parlor, where he held a levee for about an hour, and no free-trader cared to mar the harmony of the occasion." It was Clay's custom to spend an hour or more after dinner in the ladies' parlor in meeting his friends, and in making more friends.

Clay as every one knows, was at his best as a compromiser. Most great orators have made their fame in advocating radical causes. Clay on the other hand was the orator of conservatism. It was in pleading for the Union, in urging compromise that many if not most, of his great speeches were uttered. The following incident is told of him in connection with the great conflict of 1849-50. The narrator says: "After one of his days of severe conflict, he took his seat at the table without saying a word to one of us. Senator Berrien said: 'Mr. Clay why don't you speak. Are you angry at everybody?' 'That is just it,' says Mr. Clay; 'I cannot say that I am angry at any one in particular. I think I am angry at every one. Here is our country on the very verge of civil war, which every one pretends to be anxious to avoid, yet everyone wants his own way, irrespective of the interests and wishes of others.' Then turning to us he said 'Come gentlemen, go to my parlor after dinner, and let me lock you in, and I remaining outside, will agree to present any plan of conciliation you may agree upon, to the Senate, and advocate it.'" About this time a committee of New England manufacturers approached him with reference to the tariff. Before all he broke out: "Don't talk

to me about the tariff when it is doubtful whether we have a country. Go and see your Massachusetts delegation and urge them to lay aside their sectional jealousies, to cease exasperating the South, and to cultivate a spirit of peace. Save your country and then talk about your tariff."

#### QUOTATIONS.

These anecdotes of Clay are taken from Winthrop's "Recollections of Clay." "With a rich and ready command of language of his own, he was an infrequent quoter of other men's thoughts or words, and certainly no accumulator of elegant extracts for the adornment of his speeches. Indeed he was proverbial for blundering over even the most familiar quotations from Shakespeare. The late George Evans, one of the ablest Senators ever sent to Washington by a state which may boast of a Peleg Sprague and a William Pitt Fessenden [Maine] . . . used to tell more than one amusing story of Mr. Clay's efforts in this line. 'What is it,' said Clay to him one day, 'that Shakespeare says about a rose smelling as sweet &c. Write me down those lines; and be sure you get them exactly right, and let them be in a large legible hand.' And so Mr. Evans having verified his memory, at Clay's request, by a resort to the Congressional Library, and having laid the lines in plain, bold letters on Mr. Clay's desk,—

'What's in a name? That which we call a rose,

By any other name would smell as sweet'

awaited the result. As the great statesman approached that part of his speech in which he was to apply them,

there was an evident embarrassment. He fumbled over his notes for a while, then grasped the little copy with a nervous effort, and at last ejaculated in despair, 'A rose will smell the same, call it what you will.' "

"On another occasion he had fortified himself by recalling the exclamation of Hamlet, 'Let the galled jade wince,'—but it was only after saying 'unlung' and 'unstrung' that on the third attempt, and by the prompting of a friend, he made the Senate Chamber ring with the true words, 'our withers are unwrung.' "

#### CLAY ON THE CHARGE OF CORRUPTION.

Clay wrote the following letter to a member of the Virginia legislature in regard to the charge of corruption in 1825.

WASHINGTON, February 4, 1825.

"My Dear Sir: I have received, and read, with all the attention due to our ancient and unbroken friendship, your letter of the 2nd instant. You state, that the conviction has been forced upon the Richmond public, by the papers which are daily received from this city, that I have gone over to the party of Mr. Adams, with a view to constitute a part of his cabinet. Do you believe it? Then you ought not to respect me. Do you wish me to deny it? Then you cannot respect me. What do you desire? That I shall vote for Mr. Crawford? *I can not*; for General Jackson—*I will not*. I shall pursue the course, which my conscience dictates, regardless of all imputations, and all consequences. I love the state which gave me birth, more than she loves me. Personally, I would make any sacrifice to evince this attachment. But I have public duties to perform, which comprehend a consideration of her peculiar interests and wishes, and those of the rest of the confederacy. Those I *shall* perform. In doing so, I may incur, unfortunately, her displeasure. *Be it so*. I cannot help it. The quiet of my conscience is of more importance to me, than the good opinion of even Virginia, highly as I do, and ever must, respect it.

Your faithful friend, H. CLAY."

## THE STORY OF HENRY CLAY.

FOR A SCHOOL OR CLUB PROGRAMME.

Each numbered paragraph is to be given to a pupil or member to read, or to recite, in a clear, distinct tone.

If the school or club is small, each person may take three or four paragraphs, but should not be required to recite them in succession.

1. The "Great American Commoner," Henry Clay, was born in Hanover County, Virginia, on the 12th of April, 1777.

2. He came into the world during one of the most memorable periods in its history,—the time when his native land was struggling to achieve her liberties and win a place among the nations of the earth.

3. His father Rev. Charles Clay was a highly esteemed Baptist minister who officiated with great acceptance in that region of the country to which the name "Slashes" was given on account of the low and marshy nature of the soil.

4. From this circumstance Henry Clay was frequently called "The Mill-boy of the Slashes."

5. Henry's father had a long struggle with poverty until 1781 when he died, leaving a small and encumbered property to his widow and seven children; of these Henry was the fifth, and although a bright, cheerful and intelligent lad he gave no special indication of superior ability.

6. The only school he ever attended was one of the old "field schools" of the country. This was taught by an Englishman, who was a good natured man, but not always a strict observer of temperance.

7. Henry learned to read and write, and to cipher as far as Practice.

8. This was the only school he ever attended. He often regretted in after life, when sometimes taunted with his imperfect education, that he could not have enjoyed greater privileges.

9. He assisted his widowed mother in cultivating the farm until he was fourteen years old. He was then procured a situation in a drug store in Richmond, where he served as errand boy and clerk of all work for a year.

10. His mother married Mr. Henry Watkins in 1792 and removed to Kentucky. Henry obtained through Mr. Watkin's influence a

place as copying clerk in the office of Mr. Peter Tinsley, clerk of the High Court of Chancery.

11. At this time he was but fifteen years of age "very tall, very slender, very awkward" and not remarkably handsome.

12. He was dressed in a very peculiar manner with his shirt collar, stiffly starched, and his coat tails standing out boldly behind him.

13. The young City clerks were tempted at first to make sport of this gawky country boy but they quickly found that it would not be to their advantage to do so.

14. He applied himself faithfully to his duties and devoted all his leisure time to reading and study.

15. Chancellor Wythe one of the most eminent jurists of America chose young Clay for a copyist on account of the neatness of his handwriting.

16. For four years Henry regularly copied the Chancellor's decisions which were among the clearest and best ever given from the judicial bench. Between the Chancellor and the young man an affectionate relation soon existed.

17. A debating society which had been established in Richmond gave Clay the opportunity to display his oratorical powers.

18. He assiduously cultivated the wonderfully melodious voice with which he had been gifted and soon became the best speaker the Society contained.

19. He said in after years, "I made it a habit at this period of my life to read daily in some work of history or science and then to retire to some solitary place and declaim the substance of what I had read.

20. "It is to this early practice of the art of all arts that I am indebted for the primary and leading impulses that stimulated my progress and have shaped and molded my entire destiny."

21. In November 1797 before he had completed his twenty-first year he was licensed by the Court of Appeals to practice law.

22. He immediately went to Lexington, at that time the capital of the new state of Kentucky, although but a small village of about fifty houses.

23. His success was rapid and very great. With it his personal popularity continually increased. His thrilling eloquence frequently won for him enthusiastic ovations.

24. In April 1799 he married Miss Lucretia Hart, the daughter of Colonel Thomas Hart, one of the most highly respected citizens of Kentucky. He lived happily with her for fifty-three years.

25. Mrs. Clay was a skilful manager of her husband's household, and by her domestic ability greatly assisted him in procuring a competency for his family. She survived him several years.

26. In 1798 Mr. Clay made earnest efforts for the gradual abolition of slavery in Kentucky, but was not successful.

27. He afterwards declared when he had reached the zenith of his fame and was opposing the nullification schemes of John C. Calhoun, that among the proudest memories of his life was the effort he had made at the very outset of his career, to free Kentucky from the curse of slavery.

28. In 1803 he was elected to the Legislature of Kentucky. While serving as a member he defended Aaron Burr, who was charged with treason. Burr made Mr. Clay believe that he was innocent of the crime! But when the real facts were subsequently made known to Mr. Clay, he would not speak to Burr when he afterwards met him.

29. In 1806 Mr. Clay was elected to the Senate of the United States to fill the unexpired term of one of the Kentucky senators. During this term he began his career as an advocate of the protection of American interests by the general Government.

30. His term having expired in 1807, he returned home and being elected to the lower House of the Kentucky Legislature was chosen its Speaker.

31. While thus serving he had a political dispute with Mr. Humphrey Marshall. Mr. Clay was a supporter of President Jefferson's policy and Mr. Marshall was an ardent Federalist.

32. According to the foolish custom of the time a duel was fought by the two men in which both were wounded.

33. Mr. Clay was again elected to the Senate of the United States in 1809 to fill an unexpired term of two years.

34. Upon his retirement from the Senate he was elected to the House of Representatives in Congress from the Lexington District, in 1811, and upon the organization of the House was chosen Speaker.

35. Mainly through the eloquence and energy of Mr. Clay the war of 1812 was declared. President Madison proposed to make Mr. Clay the Commander-in-Chief of the army, when the first year of the war seemed to end in disaster.

36. The purpose of the President was changed, when Mr. Gallatin asked him the important question. "If Mr. Clay goes to the army what shall we do without him in the House of Representatives?"

37. In 1813 he was re-elected Speaker. But on Jan. 19, 1814 he resigned the position to serve as one of the Commissioners to meet at Ghent in Belgium, with those appointed by Great Britain.

38. Mr. Clay rendered signal service to his country by steadily refusing to concede to England the point which she urgently demanded, to have the right of the free navigation of the Mississippi river.

39. From Ghent he went to Paris, and thence to London with Adams and Gallatin to negotiate a treaty of Commerce with Great Britain.

40. After his return to the United States he was tendered by President Madison the Mission to Russia and a place in his Cabinet, but each offer was declined.

41. In 1815 he was again elected to the National House of Representatives and chosen speaker.

42. He was re-elected in 1817 and, again in 1819 and was chosen speaker on both occasions: while thus serving he was an ardent advocate of the recognition of the independence of the Spanish Republics of South America.

43. He took a most prominent part in 1820 and 1821 in the famous controversy between the North and the South on the slavery question, which arose concerning the admission of Missouri as a slave state.

44. He brought about by almost superhuman efforts what is known as "The Missouri Compromise," and for these efforts he received general praise as "The great pacificator."

45. After the adjournment of Congress Mr. Clay retired to private life, intending to devote himself to his legal practice.

46. But he was again returned in 1823 and was chosen Speaker by an overwhelming majority.

47. He joined with Webster and others to procure the recognition of the independence of Greece, and delivered a thrilling speech in behalf of that ill-fated country.

48. In 1824 he welcomed Lafayette as Speaker to Washington making an address of remarkable beauty and power.

49. In 1824 Mr. Clay was a candidate for the Presidency of the United States. His opponents were Andrew Jackson, John Quincy Adams and William H. Crawford.

50. As none had received a majority of the electoral votes, the election devolved upon the House of Representatives.

51. Mr. Clay stood fourth in the number of electoral votes received and was therefore excluded from the choice.

52. Had he received in addition to the thirty-seven votes given him, eight more which he had a right to expect from New York, he would have been the third candidate and would have gone before the House.

53. In such an event there would not have been the least doubt of the result, for he would have been elected by a large majority to the Presidential chair. On the election of Mr. Adams, Mr. Clay became Secretary of State. The friends of General Jackson denounced him for supporting Mr. Adams in the election by the House of President, and for taking office under him.

54. John Randolph called Mr. Clay's espousal of Mr. Adams, as "the coalition of Puritan with black leg." As he would not recall the odious and unjust comparison, Mr. Clay challenged him to a duel.

55. The meeting took place on the 8th of April 1826. Two shots were exchanged, but to the great joy of all concerned neither was injured. Some years afterwards the two men were reconciled.

56. As Secretary of State Mr. Clay added greatly to his reputation



as a statesman, winning the admiration of all who loved the prosperity of the American people.

57. When General Jackson became President he showed decided hostility to Mr. Clay who had returned to private life. The appointments and removals which he made were all seemingly aimed at Mr. Clay.

58. This compelled the retired statesman to take up office once more, and Mr. Clay was elected to the Senate of the United States by a handsome majority.

59. Mr. Clay, while Senator, in order to carry measures through which he believed to be necessary for the peace of the country had to break with his old political friends.

60. He was told that in doing so he would endanger his chances for the Presidency. He made the immortal reply. "I would rather be right than be President."

61. In 1832 he was nominated by the Whigs for President but was overwhelmingly defeated.

62. In the Autumn of 1836 Mr. Clay was elected President of the Colonization Society.

63. On the 31st of March 1842 he resigned his seat in the Senate, and in 1844 was again the Whig candidate for the Presidency but was defeated.

64. In 1849 Mr. Clay addressed a long letter to the people of Kentucky urging them to provide for the gradual abolition of slavery in that state. The proposition however was rejected.

65. In the same year, 1849, he was elected to the Senate of the United States for the full term of six years.

66. During this session of Congress he addressed the Senate seventy times. He was often so sick and feeble that even with assistance he could scarcely reach his seat.

67. His last efforts for the Compromise Measures which were so near to his heart were crowned with success. He considered their passage the culminating glory of his life.

68. With the love and confidence of the whole country he came to the close of his unique and eventful career.

69. He still continued to hold his seat in the Senate, although his rapidly failing health prevented active participation in its duties.

70. On the 20th of June 1852 at the ripe age of seventy-five years he breathed his last breath at Washington, where he was honored with a public funeral.

71. No one can fully describe the exquisite grace of Mr. Clay's gestures the melodious tones of his matchless voice, "and the interior look of his eyes—as if he were rather spoken *from* than *speaking*."

72. His eloquence was absolutely intangible to delineation. The most labored and thrilling description could not embrace it.

73. During his long public life he enchanted millions and no one could tell how he did it. *He was an orator by nature.*

74. "The clear conception, the high purpose, the firm resolve, the dauntless spirit, speaking on the tongue, beaming from the eye, informing every feature, and urging the whole man onward, right onward to his object," this was the eloquence of Henry Clay.

75. One who heard a magnificent address of his in the Senate of the United States thus describes him.

76. "Every muscle of the orator's face was at work. His whole body seemed agitated, as if each part was instinct with a separate life; and his small white hand with its blue veins apparently distended almost to bursting, moved gracefully, but with all the energy of rapid and vehement gesture.

77. "The appearance of the speaker seemed that of a fine intellect, wrought up to its mightiest energies, and brightly shining through the thin and transparent veil of flesh that invested it."

78. Towards the close of life he said: "If the days of my usefulness, as I have too much reason to fear, be indeed passed, I desire not to linger an impotent spectator of the oft scanned field of life.

79. "I have never looked upon old age, deprived of the faculty of enjoyment, of intellectual perceptions and energies, with any sympathy. For such I think the day of fate cannot come too soon."

80. The approach of the destroyer had no terrors for him. No clouds overhung his future. He met his end with composure, and his pathway to the grave was lighted by the immortal hopes which spring from the Christian faith.

81. "Mr. Clay's countenance, immediately after death, looked like an antique cast. His features seemed to be perfectly classical; and the repose of all the muscles gave the lifeless body a quiet majesty seldom reached by living human being."

82. The mortal remains of this most versatile and eloquent of American statesmen were laid away to rest, not in Washington, but at his last request, in his own family vault, in his beloved Kentucky, by the side of his relations and friends.

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### PROGRAMME FOR A HENRY CLAY ENTERTAINMENT.

1. Vocal Solo—"A Thousand Years My Own Columbia."
2. Essay—Henry Clay as an American Protectionist.
3. Paper—Henry Clay as an Orator.
4. Instrumental Music.
5. Essay—The Missouri Compromise.
6. Paper—Henry Clay as Candidate Several Times for the Presidency.
7. Vocal Music—"The Sword of Bunker Hill."

8. Anecdotes of Henry Clay.
9. Essay or Address—Henry Clay's Relations to Presidents Madison, Monroe and John Quincy Adams.
10. Music—Instrumental.

### QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW.

*What two general principles help to determine a man's character? Point out some illustration in your own history. How much do we know about Clay's early years? Why do we have so little information? Have we other great men whose early years are little known? What was his father's work? How did Clay aid his mother? How many brothers and sisters had Clay? Do you know any boys no more favorably situated than he?*

*Trace Clay's business changes. Did he have a good education? Did he have a fair chance to get a good amount of knowledge? Who were his teachers? What distinguished men did he meet when a boy? How did he get much of his education? What are the comparative advantages of a college education and a practical one? How did Mr. Wythe influence Clay's life? With whom did he study law? Could he have known much law when admitted to the bar?*

*Why did Clay go to Kentucky? What kind of a people in Kentucky at the time? Why was Clay so successful? When did he begin to show power as a public speaker? When was Clay married? Give an account of Clay's children. Make an analysis of the points in Clay's early life.*

*Was Clay a successful lawyer? What were his leading characteristics? Why did he prosecute so few cases? In what kinds of law did he succeed best? Name some of the famous cases he engaged in. Was there any field in which Clay was greater than as a lawyer? Which is more important to a nation, great statesmen, or great lawyers?*

*When did Clay begin his public career? What party did he belong to in his early years? Make out a list of the great measures he advocated in the State Legislature and in Congress. On what subject did he change his position? What subjects early engaged his attention? What did Clay mean by his "American system?" How far did he wish to press manufacturing? Was he entirely consistent in his views on the tariff? What was his first speech that has come down to us? What were the arguments in his first really great speech?*

*What place did Clay hold in the House? What honor did he receive there that no other man has ever had? Was Clay afraid to express his opinions?*

*Who was the leader in bringing on the war of 1812? What were the principle arguments used? How did parties stand in regard to the war? What measures did Clay wish used in the war? How did Clay feel toward merely military men aspiring to civil positions? Who were the peace commissioners in 1814? Were they harmonious?*

*What the chief point in dispute? What effect did the war have on Clay? On the American people?*

*How did Clay feel toward the South American Republics? What did he wish done? How did he succeed in his plans? What did Clay believe in regard to Greece? Could Clay be sarcastic in speech? Give illustration. Would Clay's arguments be applicable to any conditions now existing?*

*How did Clay treat Monroe's administration? When did he first become a candidate for President? Was he a good political prophet? Why did Clay dislike Jackson so much? What the reasons for Jackson's hatred of Clay? What is meant by the cry of "bargain and corruption?" Why could not Clay be a candidate before the House of Representatives in 1825? Who was elected? Did the election give satisfaction? When did the campaign of 1828 begin? What was the principal issue? How do you explain the ill-will of Jackson and Clay? Did Clay, as Secretary of State, do what he wished? Why not?*

*When did new parties begin to form? Into which did Clay go? What became their names by 1834? Why was Clay never elected President? Name the years in which he was a candidate.*

*What was Clay's political strength? What his weakness? What plans had he to restore prosperity after the crisis of 1837? What questions arose in regard to the public lands? How would Clay treat them? Was he right? What did he propose to do with the income from the sale of public lands? Was he favorable to Nullification? How did he and Calhoun then come to act together on the tariff? For what political end above all others did Clay stand? Give an account of Jackson and Clay in their struggle over the National Bank. What plan had the Democrats to replace the National Bank as a means to manage the Government Revenues? What did Clay predict in regard to it? Has his prediction been fulfilled?*

*How did Clay feel on the slavery question? Why was he not consistent in argument on the question? How did the question affect his presidential prospects? What did he wish to have done with the Negroes? Name the great compromises he was author of in the main. Draw conclusions in regard to his political influence on American history.*

*What was the personal appearance of Clay? Was he ready? Give anecdote to illustrate. What qualities in his character do you like? What dislike? Was he brave? Give example. Could he have done anything which would have been braver?*

*What can you say in regard to his style of oratory? What did the Federalists think of Clay? Did Clay believe in rules in Congress? Any exceptions? Was Clay sensitive to criticism? Proofs. How was Clay liked by his neighbors? Was Clay a good conversationalist? Give illustration. Was he quick in repartee? Could he quote the words of other men readily in his speeches? Illustrate. On the whole do you like Clay or not? If not, why not? If yes, why so?*

**SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL STUDY.**

1. *Clay's consistency in regard to the tariff.*
2. *Reasons for Clay's positions in regard to slavery.*
3. *Did Clay do wrong in accepting, under the circumstances, the position of Secretary of State under Adams?*
4. *Is there any good proof of corruption in his political life?*
5. *His personal morals.*
6. *Were his compromises for the best interest of the Union?*
7. *His work as Peace Commissioner in 1814.*
8. *His relations to Calhoun.*
9. *His relations to Webster.*
10. *Why he never became president?*

**CHRONOLOGICAL EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF HENRY CLAY.**

1777. Born in Hanover County, Virginia, April 12.
1781. His father dies.
1791. Clerk in store of Richard Denny.
1792. Enters Virginia High Court of Chancery as clerk. His mother marries again and moves to Kentucky. Becomes amanuensis to Chancellor Wythe at Richmond.
1796. Begins the study of law in earnest.
1797. Admitted to the bar in Richmond and leaves for Kentucky.
1799. Married Miss Lucretia Hart.
1803. Elected to the legislature of Kentucky.
1806. Sent to the United States Senate for a year to fill a vacancy. Not yet thirty.
1807. Again elected to the Kentucky legislature. Elected speaker.
1809. His first duel. Both Clay and his opponent, Humphrey Marshall, slightly wounded. Elected to the United States Senate to fill a two years' vacancy.
1811. First election to the House of Representatives; the first day of his first term elected speaker.
1814. Resigns the speakership to go as Peace Commissioner to Europe, with Gallatin, J. Q. Adams, Russell and Bayard.
1815. Elected again to Congress, and chosen speaker for the third time by a large majority. He was re-elected speaker in 1817, 1819 and 1823.
1820. A supporter of the Missouri Compromise.
1821. The author of the compromise under which Missouri finally became a State in the Union.
1822. Nominated for the Presidency by the legislatures of Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri and Ohio.
1824. Defeated for the Presidency. Famous tariff debate with Webster.
1825. Secretary of State under J. Q. Adams. The cry of "bargain and corruption" raised.

1826. His second duel. Neither he nor John Randolph wounded. Shook hands after the affair was over.
1829. Returns to Kentucky and to his farm.
1831. Elected Senator again. December 12, he was nominated as the National Republican candidate for President.
1832. Jackson defeats him for the Presidency. The Nullification controversy begins. He struggles for the National Bank against Jackson.
1833. Proposes and carries through the famous compromise tariff of that year.
1834. Gives a name to the new party—Whig. Attempts to attach the name Tory to the Jackson party. Fails.
- 1831-'37. A member of the great "triumvirate"—Webster, Clay and Calhoun.
1839. Defeated for the Whig nomination by Harrison. Very sore for a time.
- 1841-'42. Opposes the Tyler administration.
1842. Resigns the Senatorship; one of his greatest and most dramatic speeches, on leaving the Senate.
1849. Returns to the Senate.
1850. Author and most powerful supporter of the "Compromise of 1850."
1852. Died June 29.

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